This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

A 0. 12169

Richard Fowler Stevens.

## FRONTISPIECE, VOL. I.

*Meg. O Arbaces is the Criminal?*

*Artaxerxes. Act I. Sc. XIII.*

*Published June 4. 1800, by Cadell & Davies, Strand.*

# DRAMAS

AND

# OTHER POEMS;

OF THE

## ABBÉ PIETRO METASTASIO.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

JOHN HOOLE.

VOL. I.

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR OTRIDGE AND SON; R. FAULDER; J. CUTHELL; J. NUNN; J. WALKER; R. LEA; OGILVY AND SON; LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.; CADELL AND DAVIES; LONGMAN AND REES; W. J. AND J. RICHARDSON; AND VERNOR AND HOOD.

MDCCC.

[*H. Baldwin and Son, Printers, New Bridge-street.*]

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
2931671
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1914 L

# CONTENTS

OF

*THE FIRST VOLUME.*


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| PREFACE | i |
| ARTAXERXES | 1 |
| THE OLYMPIAD | 81 |
| HYPSIPYLE | 159 |
| TITUS | 225 |
| DEMETRIUS | 311 |
| THE DREAM OF SCIPIO | 399 |


## CANTATAS.


| | |
|---|---|
| THE EXCUSE | 419 |
| THE ADVICE | 422 |
| THE STORM | 425 |
| JEALOUSY | 428 |
| THE OBSTACLE | 431 |

## ERRATUM.

p. 427. line 3, read " have I the truth divin'd ?"

# PREFACE.

ABOVE thirty years ago I publiſhed a tranſlation from Metaſtaſio in two volumes, containing ARTAXERXES, the OLYMPIAD, HYPSIPYLE, TITUS, DEMETRIUS and DEMOPHOON. It was my deſign to have proceeded occaſionally with the reſt of his dramas, but being ſoon engaged in ſuch profeſſional duties as required all my attention, the proſecution of that deſign was neceſſarily ſuſpended. When intervals of leiſure afterwards might have enabled me to return to it, I entered upon the laborious undertaking of a verſion of the ORLANDO FURIOSO of Arioſto, in conſequence of which the former work ſeemed then to be relinquiſhed, with little or no view of being ever reſumed.

But it having been propoſed to print a new edition of the tranſlation of Metaſtaſio's ſix dramas before publiſhed, I was induced to take up this author again, and have added, in the preſent edition, beſides a continuation of his dramas of three acts, tranſlations from his leſſer pieces and Lyric poems of a different ſtyle.

Many years had elapſed before the merits of Metaſtaſio were known to this country, except by a very few perſons verſed in the Italian language, the cultivation of which has rapidly advanced amongſt us, within theſe twenty years, and introduced to our more general acquaintance the writings of one, whoſe reputation, as the firſt Lyric and dramatic poet of the age, had been eſtabliſhed on the continent for more than half a century.

It is not my deſign, in this preface, to give a regular narrative of the Poet's life. Every Italian reader will find a well digeſted and circumſtantial account, by Carlo Criſtini, prefixed to an edition of Metaſtaſio's works publiſhed at Nice in the year 1785, in twenty-two volumes; in which edition are included all his proſe works and letters, together with obſervations by ſeveral Italian critics, on his moſt celebrated dramas. The Engliſh reader may have recourſe to the laſt publication of the ingenious and indefatigable Dr. Burney, entitled, "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Abate Pietro Metaſtaſio," in three volumes octavo. I ſhall therefore content myſelf with the mention of ſuch particulars, as may ſeem to be in ſome ſort connected with, and to ariſe naturally from a conſideration and review of his character and writings; referring to the Italian edition of Criſtini, and to the Engliſh publication. It cannot be ſuppoſed that I have much to communicate,

in

in addition to what has been told by Dr. Burney, who profeſſes to give the reader "ſome idea of the genius and worth of this extraordinary man, from the beſt biographers and eulogiſts he had been able to procure, ſo far as they agreed with what he had heard at Vienna; in his viſits to the imperial Laureat, and enquiries concerning him of his friends and intimate acquaintance."*

We find that Metaſtaſio was not the name of his family, who were called Trapaſſi, and lived in the town of Aſſiſi, but a name given him by the learned Abbé Gravina, from a Greek word ſignifying *a change*. Gravina reſided at Rome, to which city the family of the Trapaſſi had removed, and where our poet was born, whom Gravina adopted when he was yet a boy, being ſtruck with the uncommon genius, which he exemplified at ten years old, in reciting extemporaneous verſes, after the manner of the *Improviſatori*. Under the patronage of ſuch a friend, young Trapaſſo, or rather Metaſtaſio, as he was ever after called, found himſelf enabled to proſecute his ſtudies. Like Arioſto and Taſſo he was initiated in the rudiments of the Law, being deſigned for that profeſſion; but, by the indulgence of Gravina, he employed part of his leiſure in the cultivation of polite letters; and at the age of fourteen pro-

 duced

* See the Doctor's preface.

duced his tragedy of Giuſtino. At length having loſt his patron, who bequeathed him, at his death, a conſiderable legacy, he devoted himſelf entirely to his favourite purſuits of muſic and poetry. *

Our poets' works conſiſt chiefly of ſerious dramas, or operas of three acts; the reſt are ſmaller dramatic pieces, or Lyric poems, of all which many are temporary and local, in conſequence of his profeſſional ſituation at Vienna, as Cæſarean poet to the emperor Charles VI. and afterwards to the empreſs-queen Maria Tereſa.

It ſeems that he was chiefly, if not wholly indebted for this honour, to the recommendation of the learned Apoſtolo Zeno, at that time poet laureat to the emperor, and who, from his advanced age, had deſired to be relieved by ſuch a ſucceſſor as Metaſtaſio. In a letter from Prince Pio of Savoy the offer was made him of this poſt, at the ſalary of 3000 florins. The offer was accepted by Metaſtaſio, though he parted with reluctance from his family and friends; particularly from Signora Bulgarelli, commonly called the Romanina, with whom he had contracted a moſt intimate friendſhip, and who with her huſband, made but one family with the Trapaſſi at Rome. This lady was the moſt eminent ſinger of her time, and performed the

* Criſtini Vita del Met. p. xxi. Memoirs, &c. p. 4.

the part of Dido, in the opera of that name. The reader will ſee an intereſting account of the beginning and progreſs of this attachment in Dr. Burney's book.*

Metaſtaſio arrived at Vienna in July 1730, from which place he gives in a letter to a friend, the following relation of his firſt reception by the Emperor.

† "I returned on tueſday by command of the emperor, to take my audience at Luxemberg: I ſaw him at table: I dined with Prince Pio, and afterward, at three o'clock in the afternoon, had an audience of his imperial majeſty. The gentleman, by whom I was introduced, left me at the door of the room where the emperor ſtood leaning againſt a table, with his hat on, ſeeming very thoughtful;

* Criſtini, p. lxviii. Memoirs, &c. Vol. I. p. 26 to 110.

† "Tornai martedi all' udienza per ordine del padrone a Laumburgo, aſſiſtei alla tavola, pranzai col ſignor principe Pio, e poi alle tre dopo il mezzo giorno fui ammeſſo alla formale udienza di Ceſare, Il cavaliere, che m'introduſſe mi laſciò ſulla porta della camera nella quale il padrone era appoggiato ad un tavolino in piedi con il ſuo cappello in capo in ario molto ſeria e ſoſtenuta. Vi confeſſo che per quanto mi foſſi preparato a queſt' incontro, non potei evitare nell'animo mio qualche diſordine. Mi venne à mente che mi trovava a fronte del più gran perſonaggio della terra, e che doveva eſſer io il primo a parlare, circoſtanza che non conferiſce ad incoraggire. Feci le tre riverenze preſcrittimi, una nell' entrar della porta, una in mezzo della ſtanza, e l' ultima vicino

thoughtful. I confeſs to you that though I was prepared for ſuch a meeting, I could not but feel ſome diſorder, on reflecting that I was then face to face with the greateſt perſonage upon earth, and that I was required to ſpeak firſt, a circumſtance that did not much contribute to encourage me. I made three bows, as I had been directed, one at entering the door, one in the middle of the room, and the laſt near his majeſty. I then bent one knee to the ground; but the gracious prince inſtantly made me ſtand up, ſaying, 'riſe, riſe.' I then addreſſed him in a voice not very firm to the following

vicino a S. M. e poi poſi un ginocchio a terra, ma il clementiſſimo padrone ſubito m' impoſe di alzarmi, replicandomi: 'Alzatevi, alzatevi.' Qui io parlai con voce non credo molto ferma con queſti ſentimenti. 'Io non ſo, ſi ſia maggiore il mio contento, ò la mia 'confuſione nel ritrovarmi à piedi di V. M. Ceſarea, E' queſto 'un motivo da me ſoſpirato fin da' primi giorni dell' età mia, ed 'ora non ſolo mi trovo avanti il più gran monarca della terra, 'ma vi ſono col più glorioſo carattere di ſuo attual ſervitore. So 'a quanto mi obbliga queſto grado, e conoſco la debolezza delle 'mie forze e ſe poteſſi con gran parte del mio ſangue divenir un 'Omero, non eſiterai a divenirlo. *Suppliro pertanto, per 'quanto mi ſarà poſſibile, alla mancanza d'abilità non riſparmiando in ſervizio della M. V. attenzione e fatica. So, che 'per quanto ſia grande la mia debolezza, ſarà ſempre inferiore 'all infinita clemenza dell M. V. e ſpero che il carattere di 'poeta di Ceſare mi comunichi quel valore che non eſpero dal 'mio talento.' "A proporzione che undai parlando, vidi

* "Queſta parte del complimento non pare che ritenga tutta la del delicatezza propria di Metaſtaſio."

raſſerenarſi

following effect: 'I know not whether my ſatis-
'faction or confuſion be greateſt, to find myſelf
'at the feet of your Cæſarean majeſty; It is an
'honour I have ſighed for from my earlieſt days,
'and now I not only find myſelf before the
'greateſt monarch upon earth, but I am here in
'the glorious character of one of his ſervants.
'I am not more conſcious of the obligations I am
'under from ſuch a flattering diſtinction, than I
'am conſcious of my own weakneſs; and if I
'could with the loſs of great part of my blood be-
'come a Homer, I would not heſitate a moment
'to determine my choice. * In the mean time I
'will uſe my utmoſt endeavours to ſupply with
'unwearied diligence what may be wanting in
'ability

raſſerenarſi il volto dell' auguſtiſſimo padrone, il quale in fine aſſai chiaramente riſpoſe:" 'Era gia perſuaſo della voſtra virtu
'ma adeſſo, io ſono ancora informato del voſtro buon coſtume, e
'non dubito che non mi contenterete in tutto quello, che ſarà
'di mio Ceſareo ſervizio, anzi mi obbligherete ad eſſer contento
'di voi.' "Quì ſi fermò ad attendere, ſe io voleva ſupplicarlo d'altro; onde io ſecondo le iſtruzione gli chieſi la permiſſione di bacciargli la mano, ed egli me la porſe ridendo, e ſtringendo la mia; ond' io conſolato da queſta dimoſtrazione d'amore, ſtrinſi con un traſporto di contento la mano Ceſarea con entrambe le mie e le diedi un baccio coſi ſonoro che potè il clementiſſimo padrone aſſai bene avvederſi che veniva dal cuore."

Criſtini, vita del Met. p. lxxxix.
Memoirs, &c. Vol. I. p. 43 to 62.

* The Italian Editor here obſerves, that this part of Metaſtaſio's ſpeech does not ſeem to have all his uſual delicacy.

'ability to ſerve your imperial majeſty: I am 'truly ſenſible that, whatever my incapacity may 'be, it will always experience the infinite clemency 'of your majeſty; and I hope that the character 'of Cæſarean poet will inſpire me with what I 'deſpair of attaining by my own talents.' "As I continued to ſpeak, I obſerved that the countenance of my auguſt patron aſſumed a look of complacency, and when I had concluded he anſwered with great affability: 'I was before well convin-'of your genius, but now I am perſuaded of the 'goodneſs of your diſpoſition, and I doubt not but 'you will acquit yourſelf well in your office, and 'that I ſhall be perfectly ſatisfied with you.' "He then ſtopped to hear if I had any thing further to ſay, when, agreeable to the inſtructions that had been given me, I begged permiſſion to kiſs his hand: he held it to me with a ſmile, preſſing my hand in his. Encouraged by this token of kindneſs, I preſſed his imperial hand with both mine, and gave it ſo fervent a kiſs, that his gracious majeſty muſt have been ſenſible it came from my heart."*

Metaſtaſio continued in the ſervice of the emperor Charles VI. till the death of that prince in the year 1740, and continued afterwards in the ſervice of the empreſs-queen, beloved and reſpected by all; during which time he modeſtly declined many

* Criſtini p. lxxxix. Memoirs, &c. p. 43 to 62.

many offers of honourable diſtinction, made him by both ſovereigns. At the deceaſe of his patroneſs, Maria Tereſa, in the year 1780, he received the warmeſt aſſurances of favour and protection from the emperor Joſeph II. ſoon after which he died, upwards of eighty-four years of age, having been fifty years abſent from Rome and reſident at the imperial court.*

Though the firſt opera of Metaſtaſio was written in 1724, and his reputation continued increaſing till he entered into the emperor's ſervice in the year 1730, yet none of his dramas were known to the Engliſh reader, till my tranſlation in the year 1767, except from ſuch of them as had been performed at our theatre.

But a peruſal of theſe could, even in the Italian, give little, or rather no idea of the talents and genius of Metaſtaſio. The principal deſign of the managers of the opera, being to exhibit the ſinger or muſician, little attention is paid to the conduct of the fable. As our audiences would, by no means, endure the length of his recitatives, the ſcenes are ſo abridged, that not only the dialogue is mutilated, but the action is precipitated, the cataſtrophe unnaturally brought on, and the whole rendered cold and unaffecting, while that art is utterly deſtroyed, by which the poet carries on his plot,

* Criſtini, p. ccix.

plot, with due gradations, and keeps up attention to the laſt ſcene.

Before Metaſtaſio's dramas were known, the prejudice muſt certainly have been very ſtrong againſt the opera poets, which prejudice muſt have been powerfully ſtrengthened by the inimitable Mr. Addiſon; and undoubtedly would have ſtill ſubſiſted, were there nothing better to influence the reader's judgment than the pieces printed for the Haymarket, not excepting thoſe under the name of Metaſtaſio in their mutilated ſtate. To be convinced of this, among many inſtances, the reader need only caſt his eyes over the DEMOFOONTE, confeſſedly one of his beſt productions, as altered for the opera theatre.

It appears, however, that this licenſe was not peculiar to our ſtage. Metaſtaſio himſelf frequently complains of the liberties taken with him by ſingers and compoſers. An Italian critic has obſerved that Metaſtaſio had written dramas too excellent for repreſentation, and that the compoſer was compelled to omit ſome of their fineſt parts in order to fit them for the ſtage, for which reaſon THEMISTOCLES and REGULUS, not admitting of ſuch alteration, were ſeldom performed. In one of his letters the author ſays: "I know by daily experience that my own dramas are much more certain of ſucceſs in Italy, when declaimed by comedians than when ſung by muſicians." On this paſſage

paſſage Dr. Burney declares his ignorance of their being ever recited without muſic, and indeed we can have little idea how they were ſo exhibited in their preſent ſtate, or in what manner the airs or Lyric parts could have been ſpoken: at the ſame time the Doctor adds "there can be no doubt of the aſſertion of the good Metaſtaſio's being well founded."*

Mr. Addiſon tells us: "An eſtabliſhed rule was laid down, which is received to this day, *that nothing is capable of being well ſet to muſick that is not nonſenſe*:" he adds, with great humour, "this maxim was no ſooner received, but we fell to tranſlating the Italian opera, and as there is no great danger of hurting the ſenſe in thoſe extraordinary pieces, &c."† But what would this amiable writer have ſaid, had he lived to be converſant with the operas of Metaſtaſio, or even with thoſe of his predeceſſor Apoſtolo Zeno, who ſeems to have been the firſt that has ſhewn the world, an Italian opera was capable of being embelliſhed by the efforts of genius. Zeno has been called the Æſchylus, and Metaſtaſio the Sophocles of the Italian ſtage.

Mr. Addiſon died in 1719, and DIDO, the firſt ſerious opera of Metaſtaſio, was not produced till 1724. With the works of Apoſtolo Zeno, I believe the Engliſh are to this day little acquainted. The

* Memoirs, Vol. II. p. 318 & Note.
† Spectator, Vol. I. No. 5, 18.

The firſt edition of his dramas collected was publiſhed at Venice in 1744.

From what had been ſaid of this writer by Mr. Baretti, in his letter from Italy, I was led to peruſe all his dramas, in which there appeared to me great merit, with reſpect to plot, ſentiment, incident and character, though he muſt be allowed to be harſh in his language and hard in conſtruction. Such an author will not be readily peruſed by thoſe who have been accuſtomed to the harmony, and clearneſs of Metaſtaſio. I had once conceived a deſign of giving the public a ſelection of Zeno's dramas in an Engliſh dreſs.

The real excellencies of Metaſtaſio, as a poet and dramatiſt, muſt be ſought for in the cloſet, by an examination of his works entire and uninjured, when it will be found that his dramas have, in a high degree, the beauties of tragedy, allowing for ſome incongruities ariſing from the general plan of an opera, which he was led to adopt. This circumſtance has been regretted by ſome of his critics, one of whom obſerves, with great truth, that the genius of Metaſtaſio ſhould have raiſed him above the inſipidities of the operatic drama.

I believe indeed it will be allowed by the poet's warmeſt admirers, that the intrigues and love-ſcenes of his ſecond or under perſonages are too often unintereſting; of which, amongſt many, ex-

amples may be given in the loves of Selene, Megabyzus and Barcene, in the operas of DIDO, ARTAXERXES, and DEMETRIUS. Such parts appear ſtill more cenſurable when contraſted with other ſcenes, that are replete with all the elegance, force, and pathos of the moſt approved tragic writers. In this reſpect Zeno has more attended to the dignity of tragedy, being in a great meaſure free from the introduction of ſuch love dialogues, as muſt tend to weaken the general effect, and may perhaps give a kind of ſameneſs to dramas, in reality ſo diverſified by plot, character, incident, and cataſtrophe.

There are ſome other features in the compoſition of an opera, to which Metaſtaſio ſeems to have too much adhered. One of theſe is a ſudden change of circumſtances, or appearance, ſo as to involve the perſons in difficulties and miſtakes; ſuch as the incident in DIDO, where Iarbas is about to kill Æneas and is prevented by Araſpes, who taking the dagger from him is ſeen by Æneas and believed to be the aſſaſſin.* Another feature in the opera is that high and extravagant point of honour by which the heroes and heroines are ſometimes actuated, as appears in the conduct of Annius in TITUS, and of Cleonice in DEMETRIUS. To theſe may be added the manner in which he generally concludes his pieces, when every perſon

* Act I. Scene XVI.

perſon is made happy, and the greateſt offenders are not only pardoned, but often rewarded, by being united to the objects of their affection. Of this deſcription are Artaban in ARTAXERXES, Sextus in TITUS, and the atrocious Maximus in ÆTIUS. There are, indeed, ſome few inſtances where Metaſtaſio has done poetical juſtice on the guilty, as in the caſe of Learchus in HYPSIPYLE, and Zopyrus in ZENOBIA.

Indeed an ingenious Italian critic, Calſabigi, in his diſſertation on the merits of Metaſtaſio, ſays, "* One great motive for my preſent enquiry has been, as much as poſſible, to convince foreigners that they have done wrong in condemning our theatre; that the dramas of Metaſtaſio, accompanied with muſic, are muſical poems; but that without this accompaniment they are true, perfect, and admirable tragedies, comparable to thoſe of any other nation."

But upon the whole it will be found, notwithſtanding the great talents of Metaſtaſio, and the above cited paſſage of Calſabigi, that no reader is to enter on the peruſal of his dramas with a mind prepoſſeſſed by the rules of regular tragedy. Metaſtaſio

* "A queſto mio principal motivo quel altro ſi agguinge per far' a gli ſtranieri, comprendere, che a torto il noſtro teatro diſprezzano, che le poeſie del Signor Metaſtaſio adornate di muſicâ ſono poeſie muſicale, ma ſenza l'unione de queſto ornamento, ſono vere perfette e prezioſe tragedie da compararſe alle più celebri di tutte le altri nazioni." Diſſert. Paris edit. of Met.

taſtaſio was himſelf a muſical man; he engaged in a province of dramatic poetry, the opera, that ſeems to have been the great object of theatrical exhibition. He is therefore to be conſidered as an uncommon genius, ſtruggling under the difficulty of reconciling two powerful rivals, MUSIC and POETRY, I will venture to ſay, in this inſtance, unnaturally joined together, in which junction there muſt often be a temptation of ſacrificing *ſenſe* to *ſound*.

Mr. Maſon, though himſelf an adept in the ſcience of muſic, yet ſays, as cited by Dr. Burney, "How great a dramatic writer Metaſtaſio would have been, if he had not been compelled to write for muſical compoſers to furniſh them with *libretti*;* and this probably was Mr. Gray's idea when he would not allow his dramas to be legitimate tragedies, but only ſketches."† Mr. Maſon adds: "It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that his lyrical dramas, as originally written, with reſpect to theatric contrivance, and judicious developement of the ſtory, infinitely excel the generality of our modern tragedies." On the different genius of opera and tragedy, Dr. Burney makes the following candid remarks:‡

"A good opera, without many changes, will always be a bad tragedy; and the moſt excellent tragedy,

* Little books, or pieces ſhortened to fit them for muſic.

† Memoirs, &c. Vol. III. p. 385. ‡ Ibid.

tragedy, without compreſſion, an inſupportable opera. In tragedy, not only is amplification allowable, but neceſſary, to diſplay the powers of poetry and eloquence, as well as to diſcriminate characters, and paint paſſion. In an opera, the narrative muſt be ſhort, the incidents numerous and rapid in ſucceſſion, the diction rather ſweet and flowing, than ſtrong and nervous."*

I think ſuch a paſſage, from one who cannot be ſuppoſed, in this caſe, to give a partial judgment, muſt ſtrengthen what has been advanced reſpecting the alliance of the tragical drama and muſical compoſition; and I can truly feel the force of what is ſaid on the difference between tragedy and opera, from having myſelf introduced two of Metaſtaſio's beſt pieces on our ſtage, his CYRUS and DEMOPHOON, in the form of tragedies.

Dr. Burney has, in a few words, comprized the general merit of our poet as an opera writer: "One of the greateſt difficulties which Metaſtaſio had to encounter, and for the vanquiſhing of which he has been admired by thoſe who have ſtudied the muſical drama, was the compreſſing the fables he choſe in ſo ſmall a compaſs, yet rendering all his plots clear, his principal characters ſtrongly marked and conſiſtent, and his ſentiments tender, nervous, or philoſophical, as occaſion required."† Of

* Memoirs, &c. Vol. II. p. 252. Note.
† Memoirs, &c. Vol. III. p. 386.

Of the twenty-ſix operas, written by Metaſtaſio, it muſt be confeſſed of very different merit, it would be difficult to fix the pre-eminence. He himſelf gave the preference to his REGULUS, though not the moſt popular: he called it his Benjamin, eſteemed it the beſt digeſted, the moſt finiſhed, and the freeſt from faults; and that which, could he have ſaved only one of his dramas, he would have preſerved. He enters into a particular analyſis of this piece, explaining his deſign in every character. Of his ſacred dramas, he preferred the BETULIA LIBERATA.*

He is ſaid to have reached the ſummit of his reputation during the firſt ten years of his reſidence at Vienna, from the year 1730 to the year 1740, in which period he produced, beſides many temporary and occaſional pieces, his beſt ſerious operas, amongſt which are included DEMOPHOON, TITUS, ACHILLES, THEMISTOCLES, ZENOBIA, REGULUS, and CYRUS. The merit of all his ſacred dramas is univerſally acknowledged.

Metaſtaſio appears to me to have the peculiar art of treating with delicacy ſuch ſubjects as few other poets would have ventured to touch on. The drama of ROMULUS and HERSILIA, though not one of the firſt in point of general excellence, yet has ſingular merit from the manner in which the ſtory is conducted.



* Memoirs, &c. Vol. I. 316. Vol. III. 309.

He wrote with great facility, for though he commonly allowed himſelf three months for the completion of an opera, he ſometimes received an order from his court to produce one at a very ſhort notice. In conſequence of ſuch a notice, the opera of ACHILLES, excellent as it is, was begun and finiſhed in eighteen days.*

Criſtini tells us, that when he had a command to write, he ſhut himſelf up in his ſtudy with his favourite amanuenſis, Signor Ercolano; not that he might commit his thoughts for him to paper, but from a ſingular habit he had contracted, not to compoſe a verſe but in company of this truſty friend, who was poſſeſſed of an admirable judgment in poetry, and to whom he imparted, from time to time, the effuſions of his muſe; and finally determined any doubt by his opinion. He conſtantly returned to his work every day at a ſtated hour. The method, which he obſerved himſelf, he recommended to others: "If you do nothing to-day," ſaid he, "be not diſcouraged: the propoſed ſubject will be ripening in your mind; you will accompliſh it to-morrow; but let not a day paſs without turning it in your thoughts." Amongſt his favourite books were the works of Ovid, the FAITHFUL SHEPHERD of Guarino, the JERUSALEM of Taſſo, and the ADONIS of Marino. What may ſeem extraordinary, we are told, that, before he began to write, he

* Memoirs, &c. Vol. I. p. 161.

he always peruſed ſome of the fineſt paſſages in MARINO's Adonis.*

In a letter † to his friend Signora Bulgarelli, ſpeaking of his new opera, the OLYMPIAD, he ſays: "I encloſe you a moral ſonnet, which I compoſed in the midſt of a pathetic ſcene I was writing, with which I was ſo affected, that I could not but ſmile to find my eyes moiſtened with tears of ſympathy for a diſtreſs of my own creation." The ſcene referred to is the parting of Megacles and Ariſtea in the ſecond Act.

SONNET.

Fables and dreams I frame, and while I turn
My dreams and fables in poetic ſtrains,
I take a part in viſionary pains,
And at my own inventions fondly mourn.
But am I wiſer when my mind is freed
From theſe illuſions of an idle hour?
Does Reaſon then exert her calmer power,
And juſter cauſes love or ſorrow breed?
Ah! no—not that which makes the poet's theme
Alone is fiction: all I hope or fear
Alike is falſe: I dwell with ſhadows here,
And life's whole courſe is but an empty dream.



* Criſtini, p. cliv.
† Memoirs, &c. Vol. I. p. 84.

O! when I wake from fancied joys and woes,
Heaven grant me in the arms of Truth repoſe.*

The ſonnet, however, was not a ſpecies of writing on which he valued himſelf. He calls it the bed of Procruſtes. He declares he never wrote a ſatire, nor ever would write one, though he tranſlated ſome from Juvenal and Horace; but his amiable diſpoſition ſeemed to make him averſe to ſeek for blemiſhes of any kind. He does not appear to have had the leaſt tincture of envy in his nature: he always expreſſed the utmoſt diffidence of his own powers, and lived upon the moſt friendly terms with his contemporary poets. His judgment and candour as a writer may be ſeen, in his examination

* SONETTO.

"Sogni e favole io fingo, eppure in carte
Mentre favole e ſogni orno e déſegno,
In lor (folle che ſon!) prendo tal parte
Che del mal che inventai, piango e mi ſdegno.
Ma forſe allor che non m'inganna l'àrte
Più ſaggio ſono, é l'agitato ingegno
Fors'è allor più tranquillo? O forſe parte
Da più ſalda cagion l'amor lo ſdegno?
Ah! che non ſol quelle, ch'io canto e ſcrivo,
Favole ſon; ma quanto temo e ſpiro
'Tutt' e menſogna, e derilando io vivo.
Sogno della miá vita è il corſo intero.
Deh! tu Signor, quando a deſtarmi arrivo,
Fa ch'io trovi ripoſo nel ſen del' vero."

mination of the different merits of the two great epic poets, Arioſto and Taſſo.

I ſhall not enter upon the invidious taſk of ſhewing how far he is indebted to others; ſince it muſt be confeſſed, that if he has many beauties entirely his own, he has ſome that are the offspring of imitation. Yet let it be remembered, that whenever he has copied, he has copied like a true genius, and that the paſſages he has borrowed have generally received additional graces from his pen. It is ſaid, that on occaſion of his having made ſome uſe of the works of Voltaire, the French poet exclaimed, "Ah! le cher voleur, il m'a bien embelli!" He has undoubtedly taken ſome ſcenes from Racine, but greatly excels him in delineating character; as muſt be readily granted, on comparing the Achilles in IPHIGENIA with the Achilles in the opera of that name.

He had little or no knowledge of the Engliſh language; at leaſt, not ſo much as to enable him to peruſe any of our authors: and on this ſubject I can ſpeak with preciſion, having been honoured with a letter from this great poet in the year 1767, on occaſion of my verſion of his ſix dramas. In this letter he ſays: "* For my ſhame I can only



* "Io per mia diſgracia, non poſſo ragionar con le muſe Ingleſe che per interprete, mancanza, che mi ha obligato già a contentarmi d'ammirar' nelle copie i grandi originali de' quali ridonda la colta ſua e ingegnioſa nazione, e ora a ricorere all' benevola aſſiſtenza d'abile amico per concepir la ſua verſione, &c."

converſe with the Engliſh muſes by means of an interpreter. This inability has obliged me to be contented with admiring, in their tranſlations only, the great originals with which your learned and ingenious nation abounds; and now to have recourſe to the aſſiſtance of an able friend to underſtand your verſion, &c."

In one of his letters to Dr. Giuſeppe Bottoni, he acknowledges the pleaſure he received from the Doctor's verſion of the firſt ſix Night Thoughts of Dr. Young, and expreſſes his gratitude that he has given him ſome knowledge of Engliſh poetry, notwithſtanding his involuntary ignorance of that excellent language.*

As it may not be unacceptable to ſome of my readers, a chronological liſt is here given from Dr. Burney of all Metaſtaſio's operas and ſacred dramas, with their ſeveral dates, the places at which they were firſt performed, and the names of the muſical compoſers.

I. DIDONE ABBANDONATA: written and firſt repreſented at Naples in 1724; ſet to muſic by Sarro.

II. SIROE: firſt performed at Venice in 1726; ſet to muſic by Leonardo Vinci.

III. CATONE, IN UTICA: at Rome, 1728; ſet to muſic by Vinci.

IV. EZIO:

* Memoirs, Vol. III. p. 107. &c. See Letters,

IV. Ezio: at Rome, 1729; ſet to muſic by Porpora.

V. Semiramide riconosciuta: at Rome, 1729; ſet to muſic by Porpora.

VI. Alessandro nel ſndie: at Rome, 1730; ſet to muſic by Vinci.

VII. Artaserse: at Rome; ſet to muſic by Vinci; and at Venice by Haſſe, 1730.

VIII. Adriano in Syria: at Venice, 1731; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

IX. Issipile: at Vienna, 1732; ſet to muſic by Conti.

X. Demetrio: at Vienna, 1732; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

XI. l'Olimpiade: at Vienna, 1733; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

XII. Demafoonte: at Vienna, 1733; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

XIII. La Clemenza di Tito: at Vienna, 1734; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

XIV. Achille in Sciro: at Vienna, 1736; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

XV. Ciro riconosciuto: at Vienna, 1736; ſet by Caldara.

XVI. Temistocle: at Vienna, 1736; ſet by Caldara.

XVII. Zenobia: at Vienna, 1740; ſet to muſic by Predieri.

XVIII. At-

XVIII. ATTILIO REGOLO: written in 1740 for Vienna, but not performed till 1750, when it was firſt ſet to muſic by Haſſe for the court of Dreſden.

XIX. ANTIGONO: written for the Court of Dreſden, 1744; ſet to muſic by Haſſe.

XX. IPERMESTRA: at Vienna, 1744; ſet to muſic by Haſſe.

XXI. IL RI PASTORE: at Vienna, 1751; written for the ladies of the imperial court, performed to the compoſitions of Bonno.

XXII. L'EROE CINESE: repreſented by perſons of diſtinction in the imperial garden at Schonbrunn, 1752, to the muſic of Bonno.

XXIII. NITTETI: written for the court of Madrid, 1756; ſet to muſic by Conforti.

XXIV. IL TRIOMFO DI CLELIA: at Vienna, 1762; ſet to muſic by Haſſe.

XXV. ROMELO ED ERSILIA: at Vienna, 1765; ſet to muſic by Haſſe.

XXVI. IL RUGGIERO, OVVERO L'EROICO GRATITUDINE; performed at Milan, 1771, to muſic compoſed by Haſſe.

SACRED DRAMAS.

I. LA PASSIONE DI GIESU CRISTO: written at Rome in 1730, performed in the imperial chapel at Vienna; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

II. SANT'

II. Sant' Elena al Calvario: for the ſame place, 1731; ſet to muſic by Caldara.

III. La Morte d'Abel: for the ſame place, 1732; ſet to muſic by Reutter.

IV. Giuseppe reconosciuto: for the ſame place, 1733; ſet to muſic by Porſile.

V. Betulia Liberata: for the ſame place, 1734; ſet to muſic by Reutter.

VI. Gioas Re di Giuda: for the ſame place, 1735; ſet to muſic by Reutter.

VII. Isacco Figura del Redentore: for the ſame place, 1740.

Having taken a general view of the character, genius, and writings of Metaſtaſio, ſo far as was deemed neceſſary for the information of the reader, it only remains to add a few words reſpecting the preſent verſion.

It was once ſuggeſted to me by a friend of great taſte and erudition, to give the public a complete tranſlation of all Metaſtaſio's dramas, and either wholly to omit the airs or incorporate them with the dialogue; as this part of the opera was ſo oppoſite to the genius of tragedy. But upon my reſuming the work, it was judged that this would be taking a very unwarrantable liberty with my author; ſince, whatever merit the dramas might poſſeſs,

poſſeſs, they were ſtill to be conſidered as operas, and as ſuch, their genuine form ought to be preſerved: from theſe conſiderations my friend ſeemed candidly to retract his firſt opinion. At the ſame time, it muſt be allowed that many of theſe Lyrics are of ſingular beauty.

Some of the dramas have, in the Italian, a kind of epilogue, called Licenza, annexed to them; which indeed is little more than a panegyric on the emperour, the empreſs, or ſome perſon of the court. This being altogether local and temporary, and from its nature incapable of being made in any degree intereſting to the Engliſh reader, is omitted in this tranſlation.

It may be proper to mention, that the little elegant drama of the UNINHABITED ISLAND, was tranſlated many years ago at the deſire of Dr. Johnſon, to be inſerted in a volume of Miſcellanies, in proſe and verſe, publiſhed by Mrs. Anna Williams, in the year 1766.

Whatever indulgence may have been ſhown to my verſion of the ſix dramas, publiſhed in 1767; it is with the utmoſt diffidence that I have attempted the ſmaller poems or Lyrics, the merit of which often ſo greatly depends on the words and turn of expreſſion. "The maſſy trunk of ſentiment is ſafe by its ſolidity, but the bloſſoms of elocution eaſily drop away."*

I was

* Dr. Johnſon's preface to Dryden.

I was however very deſirous to give at leaſt a faint copy of theſe pieces, ſo admirable in the Italian for delicate ſimplicity and playful elegance, and in which it is thought by many that the poet has exerted ſome of his fineſt talents.

Of all characters in writing, perhaps that of ſimplicity is moſt difficult to be preſerved. It will often happen that words and expreſſions, graceful in the Italian, can only be rendered in Engliſh by circumlocution, which muſt of courſe take from their ſimplicity. In this caſe nothing is left for the tranſlator, but to endeavour to catch the general ſpirit of the paſſage, and thus, as far as the genius of the two languages will admit, give the trueſt likeneſs of his author, by which only he can hope to arrive at the great ſecret of good tranſlation, that of making his work appear like an original.

Dryden tells us, that "what Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, he had undertaken to tranſlate in his declining years;" and I have only to hope that in the peruſal of the following ſheets, the reader may not too often be reminded of this declaration of our great poet, of whom it may be truly ſaid, "the falling off of his hair did but make his laurels more viſible."

There may not poſſibly be wanting ſome to condemn theſe lighter ſtudies at a certain age; yet let it be remembered that grave diſquiſition and deep argument are not the province of every

writer. He who, at any period, adminiſters to rational amuſement, if not intitled to a high degree of literary praiſe, muſt at leaſt be free from moral cenſure; nor can there ſurely be need of any ſerious apology for my having thus employed ſome hours of that leiſure which I have long enjoyed, bleſſed by PROVIDENCE with health and ſpirits, and grateful, I truſt, in the recollection of years paſſed in that LIBERAL SERVICE, from which I have derived ſo many comforts to glad the evening of life.

# ARTAXERXES.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ARTAXERXES, Prince, afterwards King of PERSIA, Friend of ARBACES, in love with SEMIRA.

MANDANE, Sister to ARTAXERXES, in love with ARBACES.

ARTABAN, Commander of the royal guards, Father of ARBACES and SEMIRA.

ARBACES, Friend of ARTAXERXES, in love with MANDANE.

SEMIRA, Sister to ARBACES, in love with ARTAXERXES.

MEGABYZUS, General of the army, the confident of ARTABAN.

The SCENE lies in the city of SUSA, the residence of the Kings of PERSIA.

# ARTAXERXES.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*An inner garden belonging to the Royal palace of the Kings of Perſia. A proſpect of the palace. Time, night: moonlight.*

MANDANE, ARBACES.

*Arb.* Farewell!

*Man.* Arbaces, ſtay.

*Arb.* Belov'd Mandane!
The dawn is near; ſhould Xerxes ever learn
That 'gainſt his harſh command I enter'd here,
It little would avail in my defence
To urge a lover's warmth; nor would the name
Of daughter plead for thee.

*Man.* Thy fear is juſt:
This regal dwelling muſt for thee be dangerous.
But yet thou may'ſt remain in Suſa's walls;
Since exil'd from the palace, not the city.
Hope is not wholly loſt: thou know'ſt thy father,
The mighty Artaban, directs at will
The heart of Xerxes; that to him 'tis given,
At every hour, to pierce the deep receſſes
Of this imperial manſion; that my brother,

My Artaxerxes boaſts thee for his friend.
In virtue and in fame you grew together,
All Perſia has beheld you partners ſtill
In danger's deeds: each from the other caught
The emulative flame: the troops admire thee,
The people even adore thee, and the kingdom
Expects its ſureſt ſafety from thy arm:
Amidſt ſuch friends how canſt thou fail ſupport?

*Arb.* Alas! my love, we but deceive ourſelves:
Thy brother would in vain attempt to aid me:
He and my father are alike ſuſpected,
When they defend Arbaces: every plea
Is heard with ſlow belief, when warmly urg'd
By partial friendſhip, or paternal fondneſs.
And for the inconſtant herd of vulgar friends,
Theſe ſhrink, when once the monarch's favour fails.
How many that with awe but late beheld me,
Now look on me with ſcorn! Where then, Mandane,
Where would'ſt thou have me hope? My dwelling here
Is danger to thyſelf, and pain to me.
To thee 'tis dangerous, as it adds new matter
To feed ſuſpicion in the breaſt of Xerxes:
To me 'tis painful to be ever near thee,
Yet be denied to gaze upon thy beauties.
Since then my birth alone has made me guilty,
I'll die, or merit thee—my life! farewell. [*going.*

*Man.* Inhuman, canſt thou leave me thus?

*Arb.*

*Arb.* Alas!
I am not inhuman: Xerxes is the tyrant:
Thy father is unjuſt.

*Man.* Yet ſome excuſe
Even he might claim when he denied my hand:
Our rank, the world, the diſtance plac'd between us:
Who knows but all his anger was diſſembled?
Perhaps in ſecret he condemn'd his rigour.

*Arb.* He might have yet refus'd to grant my ſuit
Without contempt: to drive me from him thus,
To treat me like the loweſt of the vulgar;
To ſtile me baſe, preſumptuous—ſuch reproach
I feel, Mandane, at my inmoſt heart.
What if my anceſtors ne'er wore the crown,
At leaſt they have defended it for his:
If in theſe veins there runs no royal blood,
By ſaving Artaxerxes I've preſerv'd
The blood of Perſia's kings. Let Xerxes ſpeak
His own, not boaſt the merits of his race.
'Tis chance, not virtue to be nobly born:
Did choice direct our births, and only give
Kingdoms to thoſe who beſt could rule, perhaps
Arbaces had been Xerxes, Xerxes then
Had been Arbaces.

*Man.* In Mandane's preſence,
With more reſpect, Arbaces, name her father.

*Arb.* But when I ſuffer ſuch injurious treatment,
When I'm denied to indulge a blameleſs paſſion,

'Tis

'Tis ſurely little, if I but complain.

*Man.* Forgive me: from thy anger I begin
To doubt thy truth: how ſhall I hope the heart
That hates the father, can eſteem the daughter?

*Arb.* This hatred proves my paſſion more, Mandane;
My indignation ſprings from love to thee;
Becauſe I fear, that, baniſh'd from thy ſight,
I ne'er may ſee thee more; that this perhaps
Is the laſt time—O Heaven, thou weep'ſt!—forbear,
Dry up thoſe tears, my love; too much I'm ſoften'd
Without thy grief—I here would have thee cruel—
Permit me to depart; now imitate
The ſternneſs of thy father. [*going.*

*Man.* Stay, and hear me;
I have no heart to ſee thee leave me thus:
Fain would I go——Farewell!

*Arb.* Farewell, Mandane!

*Man.* Be true to love, recall to mind
Thou leav'ſt me here with woes oppreſt:
And let ſometimes Mandane find
Remembrance in thy faithful breaſt.

When thou art gone, though, midſt my grief,
Theſe eyes no more thy image ſee:
Yet love, to give my pains relief,
Shall make my heart diſcourſe with thee.
[*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ARTABAN *behind, with his ſword drawn and bloody.*

*Arb.* [*to himſelf.*] O hard command! O fatal ſeparation!
O cruel moment that muſt thus divide me
From her, for whom I breathe, while ſtill I am left
To drag this wretched life.

*Artab.* [*coming forward.*] My ſon,—Arbaces.

*Arb.* My lord!

*Artab.* Give me thy ſword.

*Arb.* 'Tis here, my lord.

*Artab.* There—take thou mine: fly; hide from every eye
That crimſon ſteel.

*Arb.* O Gods! what hapleſs breaſt
Pour'd forth this blood?

*Artab.* Enquire not now, be gone;
All ſhall be ſoon reveal'd.

*Arb.* O ſir! your looks,
All pale and wild, have fill'd me with affright:
I freeze with horror whilſt I hear your lips
Give painful utterance to your words—O ſpeak!
Tell me, what can this mean?

*Artab.* Thou art reveng'd;
Xerxes is dead, and by this hand.

*Arb.*

*Arb.* What ſay'ſt thou!—
What do I hear?—What is it thou haſt done?

*Artab.* My deareſt ſon, thy injuries were mine—
For thee I am guilty.

*Arb.* Ha! for me you are guilty!
There wanted only this to increaſe my woes.
And what are now your hopes?

*Artab.* My mind revolves
A great deſign; thou may'ſt perhaps aſſume
The reins of ſovereignty—depart—my purpoſe
Demands that I remain.

*Arb.* My ſoul's diſtracted
In this dread interval!

*Artab.* Still doſt thou linger?

*Arb.* O Heaven!

*Artab.* Depart—no more—leave me in peace.

*Arb.* What fatal day is this! undone Arbaces!

A thouſand woes my breaſt ſurpriſe;
I pant in every part:
Cold through my veins the current flies
To guard my trembling heart.

What anguiſh muſt this ſtroke of fate
My dear Mandane coſt!
How ſhall my ſoul lament too late
A father's virtue loſt! [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE III.

ARTABAN *alone.*

Be reſolute, my thoughts! the firſt bold ſtep
Demands a ſecond: to withdraw the hand
When enter'd upon crimes, were to be guilty
Without the hopes to enjoy the fruits of treaſon.
Drain then the royal blood its utmoſt drop,
Nor let the empty name of virtue ſhake me.
Whate'er we judge, even daring guilt ſometimes
May claim applauſe. To combat with ourſelves;
To bear unmov'd the pangs of ſelf-remorſe;
Amidſt ſurrounding objects of affright
To keep the courage fix'd: theſe, theſe are virtues
A glorious crime requires—but ſee, the prince:
Now to my wiles—What mean theſe ſudden cries!
What tumult's this!

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* ARTAXERXES, MEGABYZUS *and Guards.*

*Artab.* Already riſen, ſir!
When ſcarce the day has dawn'd? What means this anger
Which mingles with the grief, that clouds your brow?

*Artax.* O deareſt Artaban! moſt welcome to me:
Give

Give me thy counſel, give me aid, revenge;
All, all I aſk from thy fidelity.

*Artab.* I tremble, Prince, at this confus'd command:
Declare yourſelf more fully.

*Artax.* O ye powers!
My father on his bed there murder'd lies!

*Artab.* Say, how!

*Artax.* I know not—'midſt the ſhade and ſilence
Of this unhappy night, ſome villain wrought
The horrid deed.

*Artab.* Inſatiate luſt of empire!
What piety, what holy bond of nature
Can curb thy impious, thy ungovern'd rage!

*Artax.* I underſtand thee, friend; my faithleſs brother,
Darius is the guilty.

*Artab.* Who but he
By night could penetrate the royal palace?
Who elſe could find acceſs to Xerxes' bed?
His diſcontent, his turbulence of temper,
His eagerneſs to graſp his father's ſceptre—
Alas! my lord! I tremble for your life:
For pity's ſake take heed—for oft one crime
Is as a ſtep that to another leads:
Revenge your father, and preſerve yourſelf.

*Artax.* O! if there's one amongſt you preſent here,

Who

Who feels compaſſion for a murder'd king;
Who feels abhorrence of the crime, who calls
Himſelf my friend—now let him fly, to puniſh
The parricide, the traitor.

*Artab.* Guards, to you,
In Artaxerxes ſpeaks a prince, a ſon;
Or rather ſay in him your ſovereign ſpeaks:
Obey his mandate, puniſh this offender,
I'll lead you forth and teach you where to ſtrike.
Now Fortune favour my deſigns. [*aſide.*

*Artax.* Yet ſtay:
Hear me; revenge like this may more offend
My father than the crime: Is not Darius
The ſon of Xerxes?

*Artab.* O! 'twere impious now
To counſel mercy: he whoſe hand could ſhed
A parent's blood, has loſt the name of ſon.

On troubled Lethe's dreary coaſt,
Hark! a king and father's ghoſt
Calls for vengeance and repoſe!
His looks now chill my ſoul with fear;
And now his dreadful voice I hear:
See! in his breaſt, reveal'd to view,
That breaſt from whence your life you drew,
His gaping wound he ſhows!
[*Exit with guards.*

SCENE

## SCENE V.

ARTAXERXES, MEGABYZUS.

*Artax.* What victim muſt I ſlay! O Megabyzus!

*Mega.* Remove your doubts: one ſtroke alone will puniſh
An impious murderer and ſecure your reign.

*Artax.* But to the world my juſtice may appear
A thirſt of empire—O this thought alone
Will blot the peace of all my future days!
No—no—it muſt not be: let me be gone
And call the ſentence back. [*going.*

*Mega.* My lord! what would you?
Now is the time to avenge your private wrongs.
Learn to be cruel from your cruel brother,
He oft has taught it you.

*Artax.* Yet ought not I
To imitate his crimes: his frequent guilt
Acquits not mine. Is there a fault on earth
But what may plead example? None are guilty,
If to produce example may ſuffice
To wipe away the ſtain.

*Mega.* But ſelf-defence
Is nature's law: unleſs you take his life
By him you muſt be ſlain.

*Artax.* O no—my danger
Shall find the favour of protecting Jove
To ſave me from a brother's impious rage. [*going.*

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* SEMIRA.

*Sem.* Prince, whither would you go?

*Artax.* Farewell, Semira.

*Sem.* You fly me, Artaxerxes; ſtay and hear me.

*Artax.* Permit me to depart; detain me not.

*Sem.* Is this the welcome that thou giv'ſt to her,
Who ſighs but for thy love?

*Artax.* If I hear more,
Too much, Semira, I offend my duty.

*Sem.* Go then, ingrate! I plainly read thy ſcorn.

*Artax.* Forbear, dear idol of my love!
O! call me not ingrate:
Enough, alas! I'm doom'd to prove
The frowns of angry fate.

Love knows my paſſions, void of art,
Still on thy beauties dwell:
This truth my ever conſtant heart,
This truth thy own can tell. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

SEMIRA, MEGABYZUS.

*Sem.* My fears are great: ere break of day my brother
Departed hence: I met my father arm'd,
Who ſpoke not to me: Artaxerxes troubled,
Accuſes Heaven and leaves me. Megabyzus,
What means all this? Thou know'ſt—relieve my doubts,
And teach me what to fear.

*Mega.* And know'ſt thou not,
That now fraternal ſtrife divides the court?
Art thou to learn that Xerxes, in his ſleep,
Is murder'd by Darius?

*Sem.* Heavenly powers!
What do I hear! moſt wretched Perſia!

*Mega.* Ceaſe,
Ceaſe vainly to afflict thyſelf, Semira:
What part haſt thou in quarrels of ambition,
In theſe diſſenſions of the royal houſe?
Perhaps you fear that Perſia's realms may want
A king to rule—O we ſhall find too many
To exact our ſervitude! Then let the brothers
Rage on, and drench with rival blood the throne;
Whoever conquers is to me the ſame.

*Sem.* But in the general troubles of a ſtate,
Each

Each bears a part; and in a faithful ſubject,
Indifference is a crime. I know a ſon
Has drench'd his weapon in a father's blood:
I know that Artaxerxes is in danger;
And would'ſt thou have me yet, a tame ſpectatreſs,
Behold the fatal ſpectacle unmov'd,
As on the tragic ſcene the mimic ſufferings
Of mad Oreſtes?

*Mega.* I perceive the love
Of Artaxerxes, in Semira ſpeaks.
But know that, either victor o'er his brother,
The throne aſcending, he'll forget Semira;
Or, if ſubdued, his rival's policy
Will hunt his life: thus, either way you loſe him,
A conqueror or vanquiſh'd. Would you deign
To hear the dictates of a faithful breaſt,
Select a lover like yourſelf in rank.
Reflect that Love delights in equal ſtate:
And ſhould you e'er vouchſafe to attend my counſel,
Remember, fair one, then, who moſt adores you.

*Sem.* Thy counſel, ſure, is worthy of thyſelf;
And to reward it, I'll return this other,
Which better ſuits than thine—forbear to love me.

*Mega.* Impoſſible to ſee and not to love thee!

*Sem.* And who compels thee then to gaze upon me?
Fly from my preſence, and ſome other ſeek
More grateful for thy love.

*Mega.* My flight avails not:
Your image ſtill remains within my breaſt:
My ſoul, even abſent, dotes upon your beauties,
Still views, and ſtill adores them. Yes, Semira,
When uſe becomes a nature, what we loſe,
Our fancy forms and ſets in dreams before us.

The warrior dreams of fighting bands;
The huntſman dreams of ſylvan lands:
The fiſher dreams his ſports again,
And ſpreads the net, or guides the cane.
Whene'er in ſleep I cloſe my eyes,
In ſleep I ſee her form ariſe;
Her form, for whom, alas! in vain
All day I ſigh, all day complain! [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

SEMIRA *alone.*

Almighty powers! Protecting Gods of Perſia!
Guard for this realm the life of Artaxerxes.
Yet, ah! ſhould he be victor o'er Darius,
To me he's loſt! this hand which, when a ſubject,
He deign'd to aſk, a ſovereign he'll deſpiſe.
But ſhall my tears be weigh'd againſt his life?
Let him but reign, and I ſubmit to loſe him.
O! I were impious to deſire his death,
Through fear he ſhould forſake me—No, ye Gods,
I'll ne'er repent my prayer for Artaxerxes.

Cruel fate! from love's exceſs
To wiſh to loſe what moſt I love!
Sure never maid felt ſuch diſtreſs:
No breaſt can greater torments prove.

Yet 'midſt my griefs I ſhall be bleſs'd,
If he I love but pitying ſays:
Too much, Semira, thou'rt oppreſs'd;
Whom love ungrateful thus repays. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

*The palace.*

MANDANE *alone.*

Where ſhall I fly, or whither ſhall I turn!
For pity's ſake, who from this fatal palace
Will lead my ſteps, or give me needful counſel?
Unhappy names of ſiſter, lover, daughter!
In one diſtreſsful moment muſt I loſe
My brothers, father, lover—

## SCENE X.

*Enter* ARTAXERXES.

*Artax.* Ah! Mandane.

*Man.* Say, Artaxerxes, does Darius live?
Or haſt thou yet begun to incur the guilt
Of thy poor brother's death?

*Artax.* Princeſs, I ſeek
To ſave me from the crime: My zeal, O Heaven!

Drew from my haſty lips the cruel order;
Which ſcarcely given, my ſoul was ſeiz'd with horror:
From place to place I run thro' all the palace,
To ſtop the dire effects, and aſk, in vain,
Tidings of Artaban and of Darius.

*Man.* See, Artaban is here.

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* ARTABAN.

*Artab.* My lord!

*Artax.* My friend!

*Artab.* I ſought you, ſir.

*Artax.* And I've purſued thy ſteps.

*Artab.* Perhaps you fear——

*Artax.* I fear—

*Artab.* Diſmiſs your fears:
'Tis finiſh'd——Artaxerxes is my king:
Darius is chaſtis'd.

*Artax.* Immortal powers!

*Man.* Unhappy fate!

*Artab.* The unwary parricide
Himſelf expos'd his boſom to the ſtroke.

*Artax.* O Gods!

*Artab.* You ſigh—we but obey'd the order
Yourſelf had given.

*Artax.*

*Artax.* Thou ſhould'ſt have better read
My ſecret ſoul.

*Man.* Thou might'ſt have well foreſeen
His horror, his repentance.

*Artax.* In a ſon
Who loſt his father, O! thou ſhould'ſt have pitied
The firſt emotions of ungovern'd paſſion.

*Artab.* Such pity had been vain. To obey the mandate
So ready were thy guards, that ere I ſaw them
Attack Darius, I beheld him ſlain.

*Artax.* O villains! never ſhall they drench unpuniſh'd
Their impious weapons in a prince's blood.

*Artab.* But, ſir! 'twas your command that made them bold,
The fatal ſtroke was yours, and yours alone.

*Artax.* 'Tis all too true!—I know and own my crime:
Yes, Artaban, 'tis I indeed am guilty.

*Artab.* Guilty! of what? Of acting noble juſtice,
Of vengeance due to Xerxes? Be compos'd,
And think that by an impious brother's death,
A parricide is puniſh'd.

## SCENE XII.

*Enter* SEMIRA.

*Sem.* Artaxerxes,
Appeaſe thy troubled thoughts.

*Artax.* What means Semira,
That thus ſhe greets us with the looks of joy?

*Sem.* Darius is not guilty of the crime
Of Xerxes' death.

*Man.* Ye powers! What do I hear!

*Artax.* How know'ſt thou this?

*Sem.* 'Tis certain that the aſſaſſin
Even now was ſeiz'd; for lurking near the walls
That compaſs round the gardens of the palace,
Thy ſoldiers made him priſoner: every token
Declar'd his guilt; the place, his flight, his looks
Of terror, ſpeech confus'd, his ſword unſheath'd,
Still reeking with the blood.

*Artax.* But ſay—his name?

*Sem.* Each one conceals it; when I aſk'd, they hung
Their heads in ſilence.

*Man.* Should it prove Arbaces. [*aſide.*

*Artab.* My ſon is taken. [*aſide.*

*Artax.* What a wretch am I!
Muſt Artaxerxes then aſcend the throne,
Stain'd with a murder'd brother's guiltleſs blood,

Abhorr'd

Abhorr'd by Perſia, hated by the world!

*Sem.* Is then Darius dead?

*Artax.* He's dead, Semira;
The barbarous ſentence iſſued from theſe lips;
O! while I live I ſhall no more have peace:
The cries of my remorſe will ſound for ever
Within my tortur'd boſom: I ſhall view
A father's and a brother's angry ſhade
Diſtract my days, and terrify my dreams!
In every place will vengeful furies riſe,
In dread remembrance of a brother's murder,
And ſhake before my eyes the ſable torch
Kindled in Phlegethon's infernal ſtream.

*Man.* Too mighty are thy ſorrows, Artaxerxes;
Since all muſt here acquit thee of a crime,
In which thy heart, unconſcious, ne'er concurr'd.

*Sem.* Let your reſentment find a nobler object,
And with the aſſaſſin's death, before the world,
Aſſert your juſtice.

*Artax.* Where's the impious wretch?
Conduct him to me.

*Artab.* I myſelf will go
To haſten his arrival hither. [*going.*

*Artax.* Stay:
O Artaban, Semira and Mandane!
Let none in pity leave me; help me now:
Yes, I would now have near me all my friends.
Where, Artaban, where is my dear Arbaces?

Is

Is this the friendſhip that from early years
To me he vow'd? Does he alone forſake me?

*Man.* And know'ſt thou not he was forbid the palace,
To puniſh him for too preſumptuous love?

*Artax.* Let him return; I here revoke the ſentence.

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* MEGABYZUS, *with* ARBACES *diſarmed and guarded.*

*Mega.* Arbaces is the criminal.

*Artax.* Ye powers!

*Mega.* See in thoſe looks the marks of conſcious guilt. [*pointing to* Arb.

*Artax.* My friend!

*Artab.* My ſon!

*Sem.* My brother!

*Man.* My Arbaces!

*Artax.* And does Arbaces thus return before me?
And could thy ſoul conceive ſo black a crime?

*Arb.* I am innocent.

*Man.* O grant it, gracious Heaven!

*Artax.* If thou art innocent, defend thyſelf;
Remove our doubts, clear up each mark of guilt,
And let thy innocence to all appear.

*Arb.*

*Arb.* I am not guilty—this is my defence.

*Artab.* Grant he may ſtill be ſilent! [*aſide.*

*Man.* Yet thy anger
Againſt my father—

*Arb.* O! 'twas juſt.

*Artax.* Thy flight—

*Arb.* 'Tis true, I fled.

*Man.* Thy ſilence—

*Arb.* Fate demands it.

*Artax.* Thy looks confus'd—

*Arb.* They ſuit my preſent ſtate.

*Man.* Thy ſword beſmear'd with blood—

*Arb.* 'Tis true; my hand
That weapon bore.

*Artax.* And yet thou art not guilty?

*Man.* Thou didſt not kill him?

*Arb.* I am innocent.

*Artax.* Arbaces, ſtill appearances condemn thee.

*Arb.* I own it—yet appearance is fallacious.

*Artax.* Speaks not Semira?

*Sem.* O! I am all confuſion!

*Artax.* Why ſpeaks not Artaban?

*Artab.* O Gods! I am loſt
In vainly ſeeking ſome pretence to ſave him.

*Artax.* Relentleſs powers! what now remains
for me!
And muſt I puniſh in my deareſt friend
My moſt inveterate foe? Cruel Arbaces!
Say, wherefore didſt thou give me once ſuch proofs
Of faith and truth? Were then thy gentle manners,
That outward ſemblance of a ſteady virtue,
The ſpecious covering of a guilty ſoul?
Could I but blot that hour from my remembrance,
What time you rais'd me, where oppreſs'd I fell
Encompaſs'd round with foes, and bravely ſhed
With generous zeal your blood to ranſom mine;
That while I now revenge a parent's death,
I might not ſeem ungrateful to a friend.

*Arb.* Let not the guiltleſs loſe your former love,
If ever I deſerv'd, I ſtill deſerve it.

*Artab.* Preſumptuous! canſt thou claim without
a bluſh
The affections of thy prince? Perfidious ſon!
Thy father's ſhame, thy father's puniſhment.

*Arb.* Art thou, my father, too conſpir'd againſt me?

*Artab.* What wouldſt thou have from me? Shall
I partake
Thy guilt by parlying with thee? No, my lord,
[*to* Artaxerxes.
Prove, prove thy juſtice; I myſelf ſolicit
His ſpeedy ſentence; plead not in his favour
That Artaban's his father—O forget

My

My loyal truth, forget the blood which oft
In danger's field I laviſh'd for my country,
And mingle his with what I've ſhed before.

*Artax.* O wondrous faith!

*Artab.* Reſolve—and if you ſtill
Retain ſome kindneſs for him, now forget it.

*Artax.* I will reſolve—but hard muſt prove the trial!

Ah! ceaſe awhile, your counſel ceaſe;
One moment let me breathe in peace:
In vain my reaſon would reſolve;
In vain, alas! I now revolve
The thoughts that in my boſom ſpring:
This way and that my heart they rend;
At once I'm lover, judge, and friend,
And criminal, and king! [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIV.

MANDANE, SEMIRA, ARTABAN, ARBACES, MEGABYZUS, *Guards.*

*Arb.* Wretched Arbaces! muſt thou then endure,
Though innocent, the bitter ſting of inſult?

*Mega.* What ſtrange event is this?

*Sem.* Alas! I fear
More evils yet. [*aſide.*

*Man.* My peace is loſt for ever! [*aſide.*

*Artab.* I tremble while I feign. [*aſide.*

*Arb.* Alas! my father,
Thou doſt not look upon me—I could bear,
Without repining, all accuſers elſe;
But O! that thou ſhould'ſt riſe againſt Arbaces,
That he, who gave me life, ſhould ſeek my death,
The thought, with horror, chills me: ſure a father
May feel ſome pity for his ſuffering ſon.

*Artab.* Thou art no more my ſon, no more
This heart a kindred feeling knows;
The heart thou vainly doſt implore,
No pity to a traitor owes.
'Tis guilt that makes thee thus diſtreſt,
And fills with woe thy parent's breaſt. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XV.

MANDANE, SEMIRA, ARBACES, MEGABYZUS, *Guards.*

*Arb.* By what offence of mine, too cruel powers!
Have I incurr'd your wrath? Yet let Semira
At leaſt vouchſafe to hear and pity me.

*Sem.* Let but thy innocence appear,
Thy words with tranſport ſhall I hear,
And all Semira's ſoul is thine:
But while thou bear'ſt a traitor's name,
Thou muſt not even my pity claim;
In thy defence I dare not join. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XVI.

MANDANE, ARBACES, MEGABYZUS, *Guards.*

*Arb.* And is there none will take this wretched life?
Ah! Megabyzus, if thy pity ever—

*Mega.* Speak not to me.

*Arb.* Ah! Princeſs!

*Man.* Hence, and leave me.

*Arb.* Hear me, my friend.

*Mega.* I ſhall not hear a traitor. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVII.

MANDANE, ARBACES, *Guards.*

*Arb.* At leaſt, Mandane, liſten for a moment.

*Man.* Think not I'll liſten to a traitor's voice.

*Arb.* My life, my ſoul!

*Man.* And dar'ſt thou, wretch, preſume
To call me thus? To offer me that hand
Which ſlew my father!

*Arb.* O! I ſlew him not.

*Man.* Who was the aſſaſſin? Speak.

*Arb.* Alas! I cannot:
My lips—

*Man.*

*Man.* Thy lips are falſe.

*Arb.* My heart—

*Man.* Thy heart
Is true to vice, becauſe it feels not horror
For ſuch a crime committed.

*Arb.* I am ſtill—

*Man.* Thou art a traitor.

*Arb.* I am innocent.

*Man.* Ha! innocent!

*Arb.* I ſwear it.

*Man.* Faithleſs wretch!

*Arb.* What pangs I ſuffer for a cruel father! [*aſide.*
Didſt thou but know, my life!—

*Man.* Too well I know
Thy hate of Xerxes.

*Arb.* Still thou canſt not tell—

*Man.* I heard thy threats.

*Arb.* And yet thou art deceiv'd.

*Man.* O yes, perfidious! I was then deceiv'd,
And then alone, when I believ'd and lov'd thee.

*Arb.* Then now—

*Man.* I hate thee—

*Arb.* And thou art—

*Man.* Thy foe.

*Arb.*

*Arb.* Thou ſeek'ſt—

*Man.* I ſeek thy death.

*Arb.* Thy firſt affection—

*Man.* 'Tis all to hatred chang'd.

*Arb.* And wilt thou not
Believe Arbaces?

*Man.* No, thou art falſehood all.

Tell me that thy treacherous nature,
Ever purpos'd to deceive;
Tell me that thy heart's a traitor,
Perjur'd monſter! I'll believe.

Fain, ye Gods! I would forget him, [*aſide.*
Fain would drive him from my thought,
Yet, alas! I cannot hate him,
As my duty ſays I ought. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVIII.

ARBACES, *Guards.*

*Arb.* No—Fortune has no further ills in ſtore;
In one unhappy day I have found them all.
My friend is loſt, my ſiſter turn'd againſt me;
My father has accus'd his ſon; my lov'd
Mandane
Mandane weeps; and yet I dare not ſpeak;
I muſt be ſilent ſtill. Where is the wretch
Like me diſtreſs'd! Ye righteous Gods! have pity:
If

If thus your wrath continues to purſue me,
'Tis more than human weakneſs can ſuſtain.

Forlorn I plough the ſtormy wave,
Without the help of ſhrouds or ſails:
The ſkies grow black, the billows rave,
The winds ariſe, the ſteerage fails.

Of all forſaken, in deſpair,
I blindly drive as Fortune guides;
While innocence, which ſtill I bear,
But whelms my bark beneath the tides!

[*Exit guarded.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

## ACT II. SCENE I.

*A royal apartment.*

ARTAXERXES, ARTABAN.

*Artax.* Guards, from the priſon lead Arbaces hither. [*ſpeaking as he enters.*
Thou haſt thy full requeſt, and would to Heaven
This meeting might preſerve him!

*Artab.* Think not, ſir,
That what I aſk ſprings from paternal fondneſs,
Or ill-tim'd hopes to find him innocent;
His guilt is too apparent; he muſt die.
Your ſafety only urges me to ſee him;
As yet the motive of his crime is ſecret,
The accomplices unknown: I would explore
Each dark device of treaſon.

*Artax.* Artaban,
How does thy fortitude excite my envy!
I tremble at the danger of a friend;
Thou keep'ſt thy temper while thy ſon's condemn'd.

*Artab.* How dearly does it coſt my heart to aſſume
Theſe looks of firmneſs, when my boſom owns
The voice of ſtruggling nature! I too feel
The tender weakneſs common to a parent:
But midſt the conflict duty ſtill prevails:

No

No longer he's my ſon, whoſe impious crime
Has fill'd his father's aged cheeks with ſhame:
I was a ſubject, ere I was a parent.

*Artax.* Thy virtue, friend, ſpeaks ſtrongly for Arbaces:
I owe thee more the leſs thou plead'ſt his cauſe.
Shall I be thus ungrateful to thy worth,
Without remorſe in him to puniſh thee?
No, Artaban, let us contrive to ſave him:
Find ſome pretence that I may doubt his crime;
Let me entreat thee join thy cares with mine.

*Artab.* What can I do when every thing condemns him?
You ſee, Arbaces, conſcious of his guilt,
Makes no defence.

*Artax.* But yet thoſe lips that ne'er
Were wont to lie, declared his innocence.
Can nature change at once? Ah, no! perhaps
Some cauſe, to us unknown, compels his ſilence.
Speak to him, Artaban; he to a father
May open all he from his judge conceals.
I will retire apart, that thou with freedom
May'ſt urge the converſe with him; watch him nearly,
Examine all his thoughts; find, if thou canſt,
Some ſhadow of defence; preſerve thy ſon,
Thy ſovereign's peace, the honour of his throne;
Deceive me, if thou wilt, and I'll forgive thee.

Give

Give me my deareſt friend once more,
My friend in life approv'd;
His virtue once again reſtore,
That virtue which I lov'd.

Companions from our infant ſtate,
Thou know'ſt in every change of fate,
We kept the friendly chain:
With him I parted every care,
With him did every pleaſure ſhare,
And ſoften'd every pain. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ARBACES *guarded.*

*Artab.* Now rides my veſſel nigh the port—Arbaces,
Approach; and you retire, but near at hand
Await my call. [*the guards retire.*

*Arb.* My father here alone?

*Artab.* At length, my ſon, I may preſerve thy life.
From thoughtleſs Artaxerxes I've obtain'd
To ſpeak with thee in private—let us go:
I can conduct thee by a ſecret way,
To him unknown; and thus at once deceive
His guards and him.

*Arb.* Doſt thou propoſe a flight
That would confirm my guilt?

*Artab.* Unthinking boy!

Let us be gone—I give thee liberty;
I ſave thee from the king's reſentment, lead thee
To popular applauſe—perchance to reign.

*Arb.* What ſay you, ſir!—to reign!

*Artab.* Thou know'ſt the race
Of Xerxes has to all been hateful long:
I need but ſhow thee to the impatient troops;
Already to our party have I gain'd
The leaders of the bands.

*Arb.* Shall I become
A rebel to my prince? The thought alone
Fills me with horror: O my father! leave,
Leave me my innocence.

*Artab.* 'Tis loſt already,
Since all believe it loſt: thou art a priſoner,
And bear'ſt each mark of guilt.

*Arb.* But yet unjuſtly.

*Artab.* No matter; this avails not: innocence
Conſiſts, Arbaces, in the fond belief
Of others; take but that belief away,
It ſhrinks to nothing: he alone is virtuous
Who wears the beſt diſguiſe, and artful hides
His inmoſt paſſions from the obſerving world.

*Arb.* O ſir! you are deceiv'd; the noble mind
Is to itſelf a world; approves or cenſures
In ſecret all its good or evil deeds,
Above the partial breath of vulgar crowds.

*Artab.* Let it be ſo—but muſt we to preſerve
Our

Our innocence, be prodigal of life?

*Arb.* And what is life, my father?

*Artab.* Life, my ſon,
Is Heaven's moſt valued gift.

*Arb.* Life is a good
That leſſens while we uſe it, every moment
Of our enjoyment is but as a ſtep
That leads us nearer to our diſſolution;
And from the cradle we begin to die.

*Artab.* And ſhall I then contend with thee to ſave thee?
No further reaſon ſeek—'tis my command;
Diſpatch.

*Arb.* Forgive me, but in this I muſt
Tranſgreſs your firſt command.

*Artab.* Force ſhall compel you;
Follow me. [*offers to take him by the hand.*

*Arb.* Leave me yet in peace, my father:
Put not my duty to ſo hard a trial;
For ſhould you now conſtrain me——

*Artab.* Doſt thou threaten?
Ungrateful boy!—Speak out—what would'ſt thou do?

*Arb.* Rather than follow you I'd hazard all.

*Artab.* Soon ſhall we ſee who conquers: follow me:
Away. [*takes his hand.*

*Arb.* Ho! guards!

*Artab.* Be ſilent.

*Arb.* Guards! come forth;
Give me again my chains: back to my dungeon
Once more conduct me. [*guards return.*

*Artab.* O! I burn with rage! [*aſide.*

*Arb.* Bid me farewell, my father.

*Artab.* Hence, and leave me;
Think not I'll liſten to a wretch like thee.

*Arb.* When ſuch reſentment fills thy mind,
Such anger arms thy brow ſevere;
How can I hope my peace to find,
Or comfort from thy lips to hear?

Inhuman rigour, thus to drive
A father's pity from your breaſt;
And of a parent's love deprive
A ſon as guiltleſs as diſtreſt! [*Exit guarded.*

## SCENE III.

ARTABAN *alone.*

Now, Artaban, ſubdue thy weak affections,
And to his fate reſign a rebel-ſon.
And yet I cannot from my heart condemn him;
Methinks I love him more for differing from me;
At once I am fill'd with rage and admiration;
Pity and wrath by turns divide my ſoul.

SCENE

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* MEGABYZUS.

*Mega.* O ſir! on what are now your thoughts employ'd?
Why are you thus irreſolute—remember
'Tis not a time to ponder, but to act:
The peers in council meet; together join'd
Are all the victims of your juſt reſentment.
There ſhall we find your rivals; theſe deſtroy'd,
The path is ſmooth'd to empire. Let us fly
To ſet Arbaces free.

*Artab.* Ah! Megabyzus,
What wretchedneſs is mine! my ſon refuſes
Empire and liberty; heeds not his life,
And with himſelf involves us all in ruin.

*Mega.* What ſays my lord?

*Artab.* Even now contending with him,
I ſtrove in vain to conquer his reſolves.

*Mega.* Then from the priſon let us bear him off
By force.

*Artab.* The time we loſe to overcome
His guard's fidelity, or ſhake their valour,
Affords the king full leiſure for defence.

*Mega.* 'Tis true: then firſt let Artaxerxes die,
And after ſave Arbaces.

*Artab.* But the life

Of

Of my dear ſon remains a hoſtage for me.

*Mega.* Behold this remedy: let us divide
Our truſty friends between us; at one inſtant
Do you attack the priſon, I the palace.

*Artab.* Our forces thus divided will be weaken'd.

*Mega.* Something muſt be reſolv'd.

*Artab.* The ſafeſt courſe
Is to reſolve on nothing: we muſt now
Have time to plan anew our baffled ſchemes.

*Mega.* What if meanwhile Arbaces be condemn'd?

*Artab.* Extremity of need will teach us then
The ſpeedieſt remedy: let it ſuffice,
That thou continueſt to diſſemble yet,
And keep thy followers ſteady to our cauſe.
Meantime with caution every means I'll try
That may ſeduce the guards: till now I thought
The attempt was needleſs, therefore deem'd it folly,
Without neceſſity, to increaſe our dangers.

*Mega.* Diſpoſe of me as to thyſelf ſeems fit.

*Artab.* Betray me not, my friend.

*Mega.* Who, I betray you?
Ah, ſir! What have you ſaid? Can you believe
I'll e'er be thus ungrateful? I remember
My low beginning: to your bounteous hand
I owe my all: you from the ignoble vulgar
Have rais'd me to the foremoſt ranks of honour.
Ah, ſir! what have you ſaid? Shall I betray you?

*Artab.*

*Artab.* What hitherto I've done for thee is little:
If Fortune ſmiles upon me, Megabyzus,
Thou ſhalt perceive my love: full well I know
Thy paſſion for Semira, nor condemn it.
I have reſolv'd—behold ſhe comes—my will
Shall make thy love ſecure, and join us both
By cloſer ties.

*Mega.* O tranſport!

## SCENE V.

*Enter* SEMIRA.

*Artab.* Come, my daughter;
Behold thy huſband.

*Sem.* [*aſide.*] Heavens! What do I hear?
Is this a time, my lord, to think of nuptials,
When my unhappy brother now—

*Artab.* No more;
Thy marriage here may ſtand him much in ſtead.

*Sem.* Great is the ſacrifice—Ah! yet, my father,
Reflect again; I am—

*Artab.* Thou art loſt to ſenſe,
If thou refuſeſt my command—ſee there
Thy huſband; 'tis my will; reply no further.

Then learn to love, and ſhould he ſeem
Ungracious in your eyes;
In him a father's choice eſteem;
Reſpect it and be wiſe.

Leſs

Leſs ſlow perhaps your heart will prove
To catch the gentle fire,
When midſt the temple, kindling love,
Shall Hymen's flames aſpire. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

SEMIRA, MEGABYZUS.

*Sem.* Now hear me, Megabyzus; I begin
At length to hope indulgence from your love.
May I expect you'll grant me one requeſt?

*Mega.* What would I not to obey you?

*Sem.* Yet I fear
Thou wilt oppoſe my wiſh.

*Mega.* Remove that fear;
By ſpeaking your command.

*Sem.* O! if thou lov'ſt me
Break off theſe nuptials.

*Mega.* I?

*Sem.* Yes, Megabyzus,
So may'ſt thou ſave me from my father's anger.

*Mega.* I would obey you: but Semira ſurely
Means but to jeſt—

*Sem.* O no! I ſpeak my ſoul.

*Mega.* It cannot be—you mean to give me torment,
I read your purpoſe.

*Sem.*

*Sem.* Doſt thou then deride me?
Till now I thought thee a more generous lover.

*Mega.* And I till now believ'd Semira wiſer.

*Sem.* Thus doſt thou ſhew the greatneſs of thy mind?

*Mega.* Is this the favour you would aſk a lover?

*Sem.* I have open'd thee a field, where thou with praiſe,
Without offending me, may'ſt prove thy virtue.

*Mega.* My virtue would I prove, but not in this.

*Sem.* Then muſt I hope in vain?

*Mega.* Thy hope is vain.

*Sem.* Theſe tears I ſhed—

*Mega.* Avail not.

*Sem.* Theſe entreaties—

*Mega.* Are ſcatter'd to the wind.

*Sem.* Hear then, inhuman!
I will obey my father; but expect not
That ever I can love thee: I ſhall ſtill
Deteſt the fatal tie that binds me to thee.
I ſwear thou ſhalt be hateful to my eyes:
Thou may'ſt poſſeſs my hand, but ne'er my heart.

*Mega.* I aſk it not, Semira: 'tis enough
That Megabyzus knows thee for his bride:
If hating me will ſatiate thy revenge,
Purſue thy hatred, I ſhall ne'er complain.

Fear

Fear not I ſhall e'er repine,
Call thee faithleſs or ingrate;
Hate me ſtill, but ſtill be mine,
Happy ſhall I deem my fate.

The irkſome folly I deſpiſe,
Of the lover fond and vain;
That would, in oppreſſive ties,
Liberty of thought reſtrain. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* MANDANE.

*Sem.* How many evils has one day united
For my unhappineſs!——Hear me, Mandane!

*Man.* Delay me not, Semira.

*Sem.* Whither go'ſt thou
With ſuch impatience?

*Man.* To the royal council.

*Sem.* Conduct me with thee, if my power can ought
Avail Arbaces.

*Man.* Different are our views;
Thou ſeek'ſt to ſave him, I purſue his life.

*Sem.* Can thus the lover of Arbaces ſpeak?

*Man.* Thus Xerxes' daughter ſpeaks.

*Sem.* Alas! my brother

Has

Has ſure no guilt, or for thy ſake is guilty,
Becauſe too much he lov'd thee.

*Man.* This, Semira,
This is his greateſt crime: his death alone
Muſt clear my honour, muſt avenge the inſult
My virtue feels, to think the love I gave him
That ſhould have rouz'd his ſoul to generous deeds,
Has, to my ſhame, now mark'd him for a traitor.

*Sem.* Cannot the rigour of the threatening laws
Suffice, without thy help, to puniſh him?

*Man.* No, it ſuffices not: in Artaxerxes
I fear th' emotions of a tender friendſhip;
And in the nobles of the land I fear
The force of blind affection; in himſelf
I fear that unknown power, that friendly ſtar
Which conquers all, and makes each heart his own.

*Sem.* Go then, inhuman! urge the fatal ſtroke,
Accuſe him, ſee him die—but yet reflect—
Firſt weigh thy conſtancy, thou muſt forget
Thy hopes, affections, and thy plighted faith;
Thy tenderneſs; the mutual ſighs exchang'd,
The firſt fond looks; obliterate from thy mind
The dear remembrance of that well-known face,
From which thy heart firſt learn'd the ſighs of love.

*Man.* Unkind Semira, how have I deſerv'd
That you ſhould thus awaken in my ſoul
The pity that rebels againſt my duty,
Which till this hour my virtue had ſuppreſs'd?
Why will you call again ideas forth

That

That bid my firmeſt courage ſink before them,
And in my breaſt renew the war of thoughts?

If e'er I hop'd to triumph o'er
The tyrant Love's too cruel power,
O! let me ſtill myſelf deceive;
O! let me fondly ſtill believe
My heart has burſt its chain.
But, ſince, alas! to thee 'tis known,
That hatred is my duty grown,
Why wilt thou force me now to own,
That while I ſtrive, I ſtrive in vain? [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

SEMIRA *alone.*

For which of all the numerous trials round me
Shall I firſt arm my conſtancy? Mandane,
Arbaces, Megabyzus, Artaxerxes,
My father, all are now my foes; and each
Aſſails my boſom in ſome tender part.
While one I ſeek to oppoſe, I leave myſelf
Defenceleſs to the reſt, and find my ſtrength
Too weak alone to bear the ſhock of all.

So when ſome flood, with mighty roar,
Attempts above its bed to riſe,
To ſtop its rage, from ſhore to ſhore
In haſte the affrighted labourer flies.

Vain

Vain are his toils; while here his care
The torrent's rapid courſe reſtrains;
Burſt through a hundred channels there,
It foams victorious o'er the plains. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

*A great council hall with a throne on one ſide, ſeats on the other for the Grandees of the kingdom. A table and chair on the right hand of the throne.*

ARTAXERXES *preceded by a part of the guards, and by the Grandees of the kingdom, followed by the reſt of the guards.* MEGABYZUS.

*Artax.* Behold, ye guardians of our Perſian realm,
Behold me ready to embrace the cares
Of my paternal ſeat; but ſo unhappy,
So full of turbulence begins my reign,
This hand, yet unexperienc'd, dreads to graſp
The ſceptre of dominion: you, whoſe breaſts
Are fill'd with faith, experience, zeal and valour,
Which oft you've ſhown to recompenſe the love
My god-like father gave you, now aſſiſt me,
And guide my ſteps to tread the paths of empire.

*Mega.* My gracious king, Mandane and Semira
Impatient aſk admittance to your preſence.

*Artax.* Ye powers!—Let them approach; full well I know
What different cauſe incites them.

SCENE

## SCENE X.

*Enter* MANDANE *and* SEMIRA.

*Sem.* Artaxerxes,
Have pity.

*Man.* Vengeance, vengeance, Artaxerxes:
I come to urge the death of one that's guilty.

*Sem.* I aſk the life of one that's innocent.

*Man.* The treaſon's certain.

*Sem.* Doubtful is the traitor.

*Man.* But all appearances condemn Arbaces.

*Sem.* Juſtice and reaſon muſt abſolve Arbaces.

*Man.* The father's blood, ſhed from his veins, requires
The murderer's puniſhment.

*Sem.* The ſon's preſerv'd,
Demands a recompenſe for its preſerver.

*Man.* Remember rigour is the throne's ſupport.

*Sem.* Reflect that mercy is its ſtrongeſt baſis.

*Man.* O let the ſorrows of a wretched daughter
Excite your indignation!

*Sem.* Let the tears
Of an afflicted ſiſter calm your anger.

*Man.* All whom you here behold, except Semira,
Require this ſacrifice.

*Sem.* Hear, Artaxerxes,
Have pity!

*Man.*

*Man.* Vengeance, vengeance!

*Artax.* Riſe—O Heaven!—
Riſe both: how are your pains excell'd by mine!
Semira fears the rigour of my juſtice,
Mandane fears my mercy. Artaxerxes,
At once a friend and ſon, feels both your pangs,
And trembles with Mandane and Semira.
Ah! come my Artaban; ſpeak comfort to me:
[*ſeeing* Artaban.
Haſt thou found aught that may defend Arbaces?
Say, has he prov'd his innocence?

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* ARTABAN.

*Artab.* In vain
Is all our proffer'd pity: for his ſafety
He heeds it not, or now deſpairs to find it.

*Artax.* Ingrate! and will he force me to condemn him?

*Sem.* Condemn him!—Too inhuman Artaxerxes!
Shall then Semira's brother, Perſia's glory,
The friend of Artaxerxes, his defender,
Bend to the fatal ignominious axe?
Wretched Arbaces! All my tears are vain!
O unregarded grief!

*Artax.* Falſely, Semira,

Thou ſay'ſt that I'm inhuman—can I more?
Thou ſee'ſt Arbaces offers no defence:
What would'ſt thou do, or what would Artaban?
Guards, let Arbaces be conducted to me:
The father's ſelf ſhall judge his ſon, ſhall hear,
And, if he can, acquit him; to his hand
I truſt, in this, my right of ſovereign power.

*Artab.* What have you ſaid?

*Man.* Shall friendſhip thus prevail
Above your duty? Sure you never ſought
His puniſhment, ſince to a father's voice
You thus commit the ſentence of the guilty.

*Artax.* Yes, I commit the ſentence to a father,
Whoſe truth is known, who has himſelf accus'd
A ſon whom now I vainly would defend;
A father, who has greater cauſe than I
To enforce his doom.

*Man.* Yet is he ſtill a father.

*Artax.* Thence has he double cauſe to puniſh him:
I on Arbaces only would revenge
The death of Xerxes ſlain; but Artaban
Muſt on his ſon revenge, with greater rigour,
The death of Xerxes, and his own diſhonour.

*Man.* Then thus—

*Artax.* Should then Arbaces' guilt be prov'd,
I thus ſecure a victim for the king,
Without ingratitude to my preſerver.

*Artab.* Such trial, ſir—

*Artax.* Is worthy of thy virtue.

*Artab.* How will the world approve your choice?

*Artax.* Can aught
Be urg'd againſt it? Speak, ye peers, declare,
[*to the Grandees.*
Is there a doubt that prompts you to diſſent?

*Mega.* Each, by his ſilence, ſeems to approve the choice.

*Sem.* See where my brother comes.

*Man.* Ah me! [*aſide.*

*Artax.* No more:
Let him be heard.

[Artaxerxes *aſcends the throne, and the Grandees take their places.*]

*Artab.* Now, now my ſoul, conceal
Thy inward pangs. [*aſide.*]
[*takes his ſeat at the table.*

*Man.* Be ſtill my beating heart! [*aſide.*

## SCENE XII.

*Enter* ARBACES *in chains, guarded.*

*Arb.* Am I to Perſia then become ſo hateful,
That all are gather'd to behold my ſufferings?
My king——

*Artax.* Call me thy friend: fain would I ſtill
Continue thus, that I might doubt thy guilt.

And ſince the indulgent name of friend but ill
Beſeems the judge, the trial of thy crime
To Artaban's committed.

*Arb.* To my father!

*Artax.* To him.

*Arb.* I freeze with horror! [*aſide.*

*Artab.* Wherefore art thou
Thus loſt in thought? Perhaps thou ſtand'ſt amaz'd
To ſee my fortitude.

*Arb.* Alas! my father;
I'm ſtruck with horror to behold thee here,
Reflecting what I am, and what thou art.
Canſt thou then judge me? Canſt thou thus preſerve
Thy looks unchang'd, nor feel thy breaſt within
Torn by conflicting pangs?

*Artab.* Whate'er I feel,
'Tis not for thee to explore my ſecret thoughts,
Or ſearch how far my heart and face agree.
Remember thou haſt made me what I am:
Had'ſt thou obſerv'd my counſels, had'ſt thou learn'd
To tread the ſteps of an indulgent father,
Before theſe peers I had not been the judge,
Nor thou the criminal.

*Artax.* Unhappy father!

*Man.* We come not here to attend your private griefs:

Or

Or let Arbaces now defend himſelf,
Or let him be condemn'd.

*Arb.* Inhuman princeſs! [*aſide.*

*Artab.* Then let the criminal appear before me,
And anſwer my demands. Thou art here, Arbaces,
As Xerxes' murderer; and theſe the proofs
That ſpeak thy guilt: thy raſh preſumptuous love,
Thy wrath againſt the king—

*Arb.* My bloody weapon,
The time, the place, my fear, my flight, I know
All theſe proclaim me guilty; yet all theſe
Are other than they ſeem—I am innocent.

*Artab.* Produce the proofs; clear up thy ſullied fame,
And calm the anger of diſtreſs'd Mandane.

*Arb.* Oh! would'ſt thou have me conſtant in my ſufferings,
Aſſail me not in that moſt tender part.
At that lov'd name—Inhuman father—

*Artab.* Hold,
With paſſion blind, thou know'ſt not where thou art,
With whom thou ſpeak'ſt, or what aſſembly hears thee.

*Arb.* But yet my father—

*Artab.* Yet my ſoul conceal
Thy inward pangs. [*aſide.*

*Man.* Be ſtill my beating heart. [*aſide.*

*Artab.* Thy crime demands repentance or defence.

*Artax.* O ſpeak—aſſiſt our pitying grace.

*Arb.* My king!
I cannot ſpeak of guilt or of defence;
Nor can I find a motive to repent;
And ſhould you queſtion me a thouſand times,
I muſt a thouſand times repeat the ſame.

*Artab.* O filial love! [*aſide.*

*Man.* Yes, yes, his ſpeech, his ſilence
Alike declare him guilty: wherefore then
This long delay? What means the judge? Is this
The man that ſhould revenge his murder'd king,
And clear his own diſhonour?

*Arb.* Doſt thou ſeek
My death, Mandane?

*Man.* Perſevere, my ſoul. [*aſide.*

*Artab.* Princeſs, thy juſt reproach has rouz'd my virtue:
Let Artaban pronounce the impartial ſentence,
And give to Perſia's realms a great example
Of loyalty and juſtice yet unknown.
I here condemn my ſon—Arbaces die.
[*ſigns the paper.*

*Man.* O Heaven! [*aſide.*

*Artax.* Defer, my friend, the fatal ſentence.

*Artab.* The deed is ſign'd—I have fulfill'd my duty.
[*riſes and gives the paper to* Megabyzus.

*Artax.*

*Artax.* O barbarous triumph!

[*deſcends from his throne, the Grandees riſe.*

*Sem.* Moſt inhuman father!

*Man.* My tears betray me. [*aſide.*

*Arb.* Does Mandane weep?
Can then my fate at length excite your pity?

*Man.* Tears flow not leſs from pleaſure than from grief.

*Artab.* The rigorous judge has done his part—
O ſir!
Permit the father now to be indulg'd.
Forgive, my ſon, the laws of tyrant duty,
Endure with patience what remains to ſuffer:

[*to* Arb.

Let not the thought of puniſhment affright thee;
The fear of evil is the greateſt evil.

*Arb.* Alas! my conſtancy begins to ſhake,
To view myſelf before the world expos'd
A ſeeming criminal; to ſee my hopes
Thus blaſted in their ſpring; my day of life
Extinct at early dawn; to find myſelf
Hateful to Perſia, to my friend, my love;
To know my father—moſt unnatural father!
But whither am I hurried?—O farewell!

[*going, he ſtops.*

*Artab.* My ſoul is chill'd. [*aſide.*

*Man.* I faint. [*aſide.*

*Arb.* Too raſh Arbaces,

What

What haſt thou utter'd? Pardon me, my father;
Behold me at your feet: excuſe the tranſports
Of wild deſpair: let all my blood be ſhed,
I'll ne'er complain, nor call the ſentence cruel,
But kiſs the hand that ſigns my death.

*Artab.* O riſe!
Thou haſt indeed too deep a cauſe for anguiſh.
But know—O Heaven!—This laſt embrace and leave me.

*Arb.* While on this dear embrace I dwell,
O hear me by this laſt farewell!
Preſerve thyſelf from ill, remove
This cruel ſcorn from her I love;
And ſtill my king defend.
I meet my doom without regret,
If all the woes that Perſia threat
On me alone deſcend.

[*Exit guarded, followed by* Megabyzus, *The Grandees go out.*]

## SCENE XIII.

ATAXERXES, ARTABAN, MANDANE, SEMIRA.

*Man.* Arbaces gone, I now indeed begin
To feel the ſtroke of death.

*Artab.* Behold, Mandane,
To appeaſe thy rage I ſhed my deareſt blood.

*Man.*

*Man.* Ah! wretch! fly from my preſence, from the light
Of Heaven, the golden ſtars: hide thee, inhuman,
Deep in the hollow earth's moſt dark receſs,
If earth herſelf will in her entrails yield
A ſhelter for a cruel impious father,
Loſt to affection, and to nature loſt!

*Artab.* And is my virtue then—

*Man.* Barbarian! peace:
What virtue doſt thou boaſt? Virtue has ſtill
Its bounds preſcrib'd; extending to exceſs,
It grows a vice.

*Artab.* But art not thou the ſame
That urg'd my tardy juſtice?

*Man.* Yes, I am;
And glory in my rigour—Let Arbaces
Be judg'd again, again I'll urge his ſentence.
Mandane's duty was to avenge a father,
But Artaban's to ſave a ſon: compaſſion
Became thy ſtate, and hatred ſuited mine.
I was forbid to liſten to the call
Of tender love, but thou ſhould'ſt have forgot
The rigorous judge: ſuch were our different duties.

Hence to Hircania's woods confin'd,
Whoſe gloom a thouſand monſters hides;
There none amid the ſavage kind,
So cruel as thyſelf reſides.

Whate'er

Whate'er of evil Afric forms,
Whoſe ſands are parch'd with burning heat;
Whate'er is ſeen in raging ſtorms,
All, all, in thee collected meet. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIV.

ARTAXERXES, ARTABAN, SEMIRA.

*Artax.* O my Semira! how has Heaven conſpir'd
To ruin poor Arbaces!

*Sem.* Barbarous tyrant!
And art thou chang'd ſo ſoon? Firſt would'ſt thou kill
Thy friend, and then lament him?

*Artax.* To his father
I gave the power to acquit or to condemn him.
And am I then a tyrant? Have I kill'd him?

*Sem.* O! 'tis the moſt ingenious cruelty!
The father judging, was compell'd to act
Subſervient to the laws; to thee, a king,
The laws were ſubject: pity had in him
Been criminal, but was from thee a duty.
No, rather tell me that with ſavage joy,
Thou ſee'ſt a ſon ſlain by his father's doom;
That friendſhip and that love are thine no more.

*Artax.* Let Perſia witneſs for me, that I now
Am grateful to Arbaces, that I feel
Compaſſion

Compaſſion for my friend, and love for thee.

*Sem.* Yes, till this hour, I with the world deceiv'd,
Admir'd thy ſeeming virtue, and believ'd thee
A tender lover, and a generous friend:
But now, one moment ſhews thee, as thou art;
A treacherous friend, and an inhuman lover.

When love with unreſiſted chains
The natives of the woods conſtrains,
The Armenian tigreſs drops her rage,
The lion learns his wrath to aſſuage.
But thou with wrath more fell indu'd,
Than every ſavage of the wood,
Canſt bid thy heart relentleſs prove
To every tender call of love. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XV.

ARTAXERXES, ARTABAN.

*Artax.* Didſt thou not hear unkind Semira's rage?

*Artab.* Didſt thou not hear unjuſt Mandane's anger?

*Artax.* I am all compaſſion, yet ſhe calls me tyrant.

*Artab.* I am only juſt, and yet ſhe calls me cruel.

*Artax.* And does my mercy meet with this reward?

*Artab.* Is this the recompenſe of rigid virtue?

*Artax.* O Artaban! in one diſtreſsful day,
What loſs have I ſuſtain'd!

*Artab.* Forbear to murmur;
Leave, leave complaints to me, for I this day
Of all mankind am ſurely moſt unhappy.

*Artax.* Great are thy pains indeed, nor little mine.

Alas! I know not of the two,
To which compaſſion moſt is due,
The friend or father's ſtate:
But this I to my grief muſt own,
That love in me was choice alone,
In thee decreed by fate. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVI.

ARTABAN *alone.*

At length I am alone, and once again
Can breathe at liberty. To hear myſelf
Declar'd Arbaces' judge, had nearly loſt me.
But let me think no more on perils paſt,
Myſelf I've ſav'd, now let me ſave my ſon.

So

So when the ſudden lightning flies,
The ſhepherd, ſtruck with pale ſurpriſe,
Falls ſenſeleſs to the ground:
But when he finds his fears were vain,
Again he riſes, breathes again;
And careful numbers on the plain
His frighted flock diſpers'd around. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

## ACT III. SCENE I.

*An inner part of the citadel where* ARBACES *is confined. A view of ſeveral priſons. A little door on the right hand that leads up to the palace.*

ARBACES *alone.*

Ah! why ſhould death ſo ſlowly move,
When death is but the end of woe?
To thoſe who happy fortune prove,
Death only can be deem'd a foe.

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ARTAXERXES.

*Artax.* Arbaces.

*Arb.* O ye powers! Whom do I ſee!
What brings you to theſe ſeats of grief and horror?

*Artax.* Pity and friendſhip.

*Arb.* Wherefore come you, ſir,
To ſhare my wretchedneſs?

*Artax.* I come to ſave thee.

*Arb.* To ſave me!

*Artax.* Linger not—but where yon' way
Leads to a lonely quarter of the palace,
Direct thy haſty ſteps: fly, ſwiftly fly,
Far, far remote, and ſeek ſome ſafer realm:
Remember

Remember Artaxerxes, love him ſtill,
And live.

*Arb.* My king, if you believe me guilty,
Why would you ſave me? and if innocent,
Then wherefore ſhould I fly?

*Artax.* If thou art guilty
I give thee back the life thou gav'ſt to me;
If thou art innocent, I offer now
The only means by which thou canſt eſcape,
While thou continueſt ſilent—Spare thy friend
The grief of killing thee; appeaſe the tumults
Of this diſtracted boſom: whether friendſhip
Has o'er my ſenſes caſt her partial veil,
Or that ſome God protects the innocent,
I have no peace till thou art ſafe: methinks
I hear a ſecret voice that bids me weigh
Thy merit and thy fault in equal ſcales;
And now reminds me that the crime is doubtful,
But certain is the virtue that preſerv'd me.

*Arb.* Permit me, ſir, to die; before the world
I ſtand condemn'd; your dignity compels you
To ſee me puniſh'd; I ſhall die contented
To think that once I ſav'd my friend his life,
And dying now preſerve my ſovereign's honour.

*Artax.* Such ſentiments ne'er came from guilty lips:
Belov'd Arbaces, let us not delay:
Enough that for my honour it be rumour'd
Thou wert in private puniſh'd, that I fear'd

To

To ſtain the pomp of this important day,
When Aſia firſt beholds me on the throne.

*Arb.* At length your mercy may be known—
and then—

*Artax.* Arbaces, hence; I beg thee to depart;
And if th' entreaties of thy friend avail not,
Thy king commands it.

*Arb.* Yes, I will obey.
Some future time Arbaces may be grateful:
Meanwhile Heaven hear my vows for Artaxerxes:
May every year of his auſpicious reign
Be mark'd with triumphs: may the ſubject world
Bring palms and laurels for his conquering arms:
Slow may the Parcæ wind his thread of life;
And may that peace be his which I have loſt;
Which never more this boſom muſt regain,
Till to my friend and country I return!

The ſtream, divided from the main,
Bathes the mountain, bathes the plain;
In ſome cryſtal river goes,
Or confin'd in fountains flows:
Still with ſighs it ſeems to mourn,
Gently murmuring to return
To the ſea from which it roſe;
From which was drawn its limpid ſtore,
Where, its many wanderings o'er,
Again it hopes to find repoſe. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE III.

ARTAXERXES *alone.*

Thoſe looks erect, that open mien of virtue
Can never ſpeak the traitor: no diſguiſe
Can hide the luſtre of a noble mind;
And in the features ſtill we read the heart.

Light vapours that aſcending play,
And ſpread with fleecy clouds the day,
May thinly veil,
But not conceal
The ſun's refulgent ray.

In vain the ſhallow riv'let flows
The ſandy bed to hide;
The clear tranſparent cryſtal ſhows
Each weed beneath the tide. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

ARTABAN *followed by the conſpirators,* MEGABYZUS.

*Artab.* My ſon, Arbaces! Whither art thou gone?
He ſurely hears my voice—Arbaces—Heavens!
Where lurks he? While I ſeek my ſon, my friends,
The care be yours to keep this paſs ſecure.
[*enters betwixt the ſcenes, on the right hand.*

*Mega.* And wherefore do we loiter ſtill?
[*to the conſpirators.*
The time
Now calls us forth—But where is Artaban?
Where is Arbaces? Wherefore this inaction?
In ſuch an enterprize is this a ſeaſon
For cold neglect?—What ho! Lord Artaban,
[*enters betwixt the ſcenes, on the left hand.*

*Artab.* Unhappy me!
[*coming out a different way.*
My ſon, my ſon is loſt!
A deadly coldneſs freezes at my heart:
I fear, I doubt—yet there perhaps conceal'd,
I yet may find—Ha! Megabyzus here!
[*meets* Megabyzus.

*Mega.* What Artaban!

*Artab.* Say, haſt thou found my ſon?

*Mega.* Haſt thou not ſeen him then?

*Artab.* O Heaven! my doubts
Still more and more increaſe.

*Mega.* Explain yourſelf;
What has befallen Arbaces?

*Artab.* Who, alas!
Can now inform me of him? I'm diſtracted
Amidſt a thouſand cares and dread ſuſpicions.
How many fatal images has fear
Rais'd in my tortur'd breaſt! Who knows his fate!
Who knows if yet he lives?

*Mega.*

*Mega.* Too ſoon you drive
Suſpicions to extremes; may not Mandane
Or Artaxerxes, urg'd by love or friendſhip,
Have ſet the priſoner free? Behold the way
That to the palace leads.

*Artab.* But wherefore yet
From me conceal his flight? Ah! Megabyzus,
Arbaces is no more; I know it well,
And each in pity hides it from his father.

*Mega.* Avert the omen, Heaven! Yet recollect
Your troubled thoughts; reſume your wonted firmneſs;
Our enterprize demands it all.

*Artab.* Alas!
What enterprize can now engroſs my mind?
I have no enterprize—my ſon is loſt!

*Mega.* What ſays my lord? And have you then in vain
Seduc'd the royal guards? Have I in vain
Seduc'd the allegiance of the troops?—Reſolve:
This moment Artaxerxes goes to ſwear
Obſervance to the laws: the ſacred cup
By your command already have I ting'd
With deadly juice: and ſhall we now ſo poorly
Loſe all our cares and toils?

*Artab.* For whom, my friend,
Should I ſtill toil, unleſs I find Arbaces?
My ſon was all my joy; to make him great

I firſt became a traitor; for his ſake
Was odious to myſelf; depriv'd of him,
What further hope remains? I loſe the fruit
Of all my crimes.

*Mega.* Arbaces, dead or living,
Claims at your hands the empire, or revenge.

*Artab.* For that alone I live—Yes, Megabyzus,
Lead, lead me where thou wilt; I truſt in thee.

*Mega.* Truſt that I lead thee on to victory.

O! let the ſplendor of a crown
To fearleſs deeds thy ſoul inſpire:
O! let the danger of a ſon
With generous rage thy boſom fire.

The heart that brave revenge purſues,
Can every feeble thought control:
And ſweet 'tis then the calm to loſe
Amidſt the tempeſt of the ſoul. [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

ARTABAN *alone.*

Relentleſs Gods! you now have found the way,
The only way to unman me: but to doubt
If yet my dear Arbaces lives diſtracts me;
I cannot overcome this ſecret tumult,
That from my reaſon takes the power to govern.

If

If thou, my ſon, to life art loſt,
No more I'll breathe the vital air;
But firſt, diſpatch'd to Pluto's coaſt,
A monarch ſhall my meſſage bear.

Beſide the ſable ſtream his oar
The infernal pilot muſt ſuſpend,
Till to the margin of the ſhore
The mournful father ſhall deſcend. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

*An apartment belonging to* MANDANE.

MANDANE *alone.*

Whether too frequent ſorrow dulls the ſenſe
Or that our ſouls partake ſome inward light
That glances at futurity, I know not:
I cannot mourn Arbaces as I ought:
Yet ſurely ſtill he lives, for were he dead,
The tidings muſt have reach'd me; fame is ever
Induſtrious to diſperſe the news of woe.

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* SEMIRA.

*Sem.* At length thou may'ſt be comforted, Mandane,
For Heaven now ſmiles upon thee.

*Man.* Has the king
Releas'd Arbaces?

*Sem.* Rather ſay the king
Has ſlain Arbaces.

*Man.* Ha! What doſt thou mean?

*Sem.* 'Tis plain to all; in ſecret has he fallen
A cruel ſacrifice.

*Man.* Fallacious hopes!
O fatal day!

*Sem.* Behold thou art reveng'd,
Thy rage is ſated: would'ſt thou more? Or ſeek'ſt thou
Some other victim? Speak.

*Man.* Alas! Semira,
Light evils ſpeak, but mighty griefs are ſilent.

*Sem.* What heart was e'er more cruel found than thine!
There's not an eye unmoiſten'd at his death,
Yet thou canſt hear his fate without a tear.

*Man.* That grief is little which permits our tears.

*Sem.* Go, if thou art not yet appeas'd, and glut
With my dear brother's corſe thy greedy ſight:
Obſerve his boſom, number o'er his wounds,
Then, with exulting looks—

*Man.* Forbear, and leave me.

*Sem.* Leave thee!—forbear!—no, while my life remains
Thou ſhalt behold me ever hovering round thee;
I'll haunt thee ſtill, and make thy days unhappy.

*Man.*

*Man.* Say when have I deſerv'd ſo many foes?

Wherefore this inſulting ſtrain?
Muſt I bear a cruel name?
Ceaſe, inhuman maid, in vain
Ceaſe Mandane's heart to blame.

Think, abandon'd to deſpair,
What from thee, ingrate, I prove:
Think, Semira, can I bear
Hatred from the friend I love? [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

SEMIRA *alone.*

What has my raſhneſs done? I vainly hop'd
That grief divided would decreaſe the burden;
But ah! it weighs the more; while now I thought
To eaſe myſelf by inſults on Mandane,
I pierc'd her heart, without relieving mine.

'Tis falſe to think content we find,
Whene'er with us in ſorrow join'd,
Another's tears o'erflow:
To ſee a friend oppreſs'd with grief,
Affords the afflicted no relief;
But ſwells the ſighs of woe. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE IX.

ARBACES *alone.*

Yet here I find her not—O grant, ye powers!
That I may calm my lov'd Mandane's anger,
Once more behold her, and depart in peace.
Perhaps retir'd to ſome more lone apartment
I may—but whither would my raſhneſs lead me?
O Heaven! Behold ſhe comes! I have no heart
To venture in her ſight. [*retires.*

## SCENE X.

*Enter* MANDANE.

*Man.* Let none preſume
To break on my retirement. [*to a page, who*
[*having received the order, departs.*
Now, my ſoul,
Thou may'ſt at liberty indulge thy anguiſh,
Thy wild deſpair—Yes, yes, my dear Arbaces,
My ſavage fury ſhed thy blood, and now
My own ſhall flow to appeaſe thee.
[*draws a dagger.*

*Arb.* Hold!

*Man.* Ye powers!
[*ſeeing* Arbaces, *ſhe lets fall the dagger.*

*Arb.* What inconſiderate rage!

*Man.* Arbaces here!
In freedom and alive!

*Arb.* A friendly hand
Struck off my chains.

*Man.* Fly hence! Be gone! Ah! leave me—.
What will be ſaid if here thou art found? Ingrate!
Leave then my fame unſullied.

*Arb.* Who can quit
His native land without beholding thee?

*Man.* What would'ſt thou ſeek from me, perfidious traitor!

*Arb.* Ah! princeſs; ſpeak not thus—I know full well
Thou wear'ſt a ſternneſs foreign to thy heart.
Did I not hear thee? Yes, my dear Mandane,
Arbaces heard thy love.

*Man.* 'Tis falſehood all,
Or ſelf-deceit; but grant I've ſpoken aught,
My lips, betray'd by uſe, belied my ſoul.

*Arb.* Yet am I ſtill the object of your paſſion.

*Man.* Thou art my deteſtation.

*Arb.* Cruel maid!
Take then this ſword, and ſate thy utmoſt rage;
Behold my boſom bare to meet the blow.

*Man.* Death would reward, not puniſh thee.

*Arb.* 'Tis true:
Forgive me, I have err'd; but with this hand

All

All ſhall be heal'd. [*about to ſtab himſelf.*

*Man.* What would'ſt thou do? Perhaps
Thou think'ſt thy blood ſufficient to appeaſe me:
No, I would have thy death a ſpectacle
Of public infamy; no mark, no ſhadow
Of generous courage muſt adorn thy fall.

*Arb.* Ingrate, inhuman! thou ſhalt have thy wiſh; [*throws away the dagger.*
I'll ſeek again my priſon. [*going.*

*Man.* Stay, Arbaces!

*Arb.* What would'ſt thou ſay?

*Man.* Alas! I know not what!

*Arb.* And haſt thou yet ſome ſmall degree of love
That ſtill detains me here?

*Man.* Enquire no further:
Why would'ſt thou raiſe my bluſhes? Save thyſelf—
No more afflict me.

*Arb.* Still thou lov'ſt Arbaces,
If thus thou art mov'd to pity him.

*Man.* O no!
Believe not that 'tis love: but fly and live!

*Arb.* Thou bid'ſt me, dear Mandane, live,
But if thy love thou wilt not give,
My tortur'd heart muſt break!

*Man.* Ye powers! how cruel is my pain!
O let theſe bluſhes then explain
The thoughts I dare not ſpeak.

*Arb.*

*Arb.* Hear me once more.

*Man.* Ah no!

*Arb.* Thou art, Mandane—

*Man.* Light of theſe deſiring eyes!
Leave me, leave me yet in peace!

*Both.* Tell me when, relentleſs ſkies!
When your fatal rage will ceaſe?

What cannot human life ſuſtain,
If life can bear ſuch cruel pain! [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE XI.

*A magnificent place deſigned for the coronation of* ARTAXERXES. *A throne on one ſide, with a ſceptre, and crown thereon. An altar kindled in the midſt, with an image of the Sun.*

ARTAXERXES *and* ARTABAN, *with a numerous attendance; and People.*

*Artax.* To you, my people, I preſent myſelf,
No leſs your father than your king: be you
My children more than ſubjects: I'll defend
Your lives, your fame; whatever arms may gain,
Or peace beſtow: do you defend my throne:
And let our hearts now make the juſt exchange
Of loyalty and love: the reins of empire
I'll ſway with gentle hand, and guard the laws
Inviolate—this to perform, to all

Religiouſly

Religiouſly I ſwear. [*an attendant brings the cup.*

*Artab.* The ſacred cup [*gives the cup.*
Receive, and bind thy oath with ſtronger ties—
Complete the rite—and drink thy own deſtruction.
[*aſide.*

*Artax.* "Bright God! by whom the vernal flowers ariſe;
"By whom the whole creation lives or dies;
"Hear!—if my lips the words of falſehood ſpeak,
"On this devoted head your vengeance take:
"Let my life fade, as now the languid flame
"Fades at the pouring of the ſacred ſtream;
[*ſheds part of the wine upon the fire.*
"And while I drink ſome ſecret bane infuſe;
"To deadly poiſon change the wholeſome juice."
[*about to drink.*

## SCENE XII.

*Enter* SEMIRA.

*Sem.* Defend yourſelf, my lord, the palace wall,
Encompaſs'd by a faithleſs throng, reſounds
With rebel ſhouts—and all require thy death.

*Artax.* Almighty powers!
[*places the cup on the altar.*

*Artab.* What impious wretch has dar'd
To riſe againſt his king?

*Artax.* Alas! too late
I know him now—Arbaces is the traitor.

*Sem.*

*Sem.* He whom we mourn'd as dead?

*Artax.* He lives, the ingrate:
He lives—forgetful of my faith to Xerxes,
Forgetful of my duty to my father,
I ſet him free, and merit to receive
The puniſhment which Heaven has deſtin'd for me:
Yes, I myſelf have woo'd my own deſtruction.

*Artab.* Why ſhould you fear, my king? For your protection
Your faithful Artaban ſhall ſtill ſuffice.

*Artax.* Then let us haſte to puniſh— [*going.*

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* MANDANE *in haſte.*

*Man.* Stay, my brother;
Great news I bring—the tumult is appeas'd.

*Artax.* Is't poſſible? Say, how?

*Man.* The rebel crowd,
By Megabyzus led, had reach'd already
The inner palace-yard, when brave Arbaces,
Rouz'd by the maddening clamour, came to aid thee;
What ſaid, what did he not for thy defence?
He painted all the horrors of their crime,
And ſhow'd the praiſe that waits on loyalty.
He ſet thy merits and thy fame before them:
On ſome with threats he wrought, on ſome with prayers;

Oft

Oft chang'd his looks, from placid to ſevere;
Till each laid down his arms, and Megabyzus,
The impious cauſe of all, alone remain'd;
But him he conquer'd, ſlew, and thus reveng'd thee.

*Artab.* Raſh, inconſiderate ſon! [*aſide.*

*Artax.* Some friendly power
Inſpir'd me to preſerve him—Megabyzus
Was author then of every crime committed.

*Artab.* Moſt fortunate deluſion! [*aſide.*

*Artax.* Where is now
My lov'd Arbaces? Find and bring him hither.

## SCENE LAST.

*Enter* ARBACES.

*Arb.* Behold, my lord, Arbaces at your feet.

*Artax.* Come to my breaſt again: forgive me, friend,
That e'er I doubted thee: thy innocence
Is now moſt clear. O give me then the power
To recompenſe thee; from the people's mind
Chace every dark ſuſpicion; tell us why
That crimſon ſteel was in thy hand; what meant
Thy flight, thy ſilence, all that ſpoke thee guilty?

*Arb.* O ſir! if aught from you I have deſerv'd,
Permit me to be ſilent ſtill—my lips
Are guiltleſs of a lie—believe his faith
Who once preſerv'd thy life—I am innocent.

*Artax.*

*Artax.* Swear it at leaſt, and let the ſolemn rite
Confirm thy truth: behold the ready cup,
And as the cuſtom of our Perſia claims,
Call down the God to witneſs.

*Arb.* I am ready. [*takes the cup.*

*Man.* Behold my lov'd Arbaces freed from danger. [*aſide.*

*Artab.* Where am I? Should he ſwear, my ſon is poiſon'd. [*aſide.*

*Arb.* " Bright God! by whom the vernal flowers ariſe,
" By whom the whole creation lives or dies."

*Artab.* O me unhappy! [*aſide.*

*Arb.* " If I falſehood ſpeak,
" This wholeſome beverage——" [*about to drink.*

*Artab.* Hold! the cup is poiſon'd.

*Artax.* What do I hear?

*Arb.* O Gods!

*Artax.* And why till now
Didſt thou conceal it from me?

*Artab.* 'Twas for thee
I had prepar'd it.

*Artax.* What could urge thy rage?

*Artab.* Diſſimulation can no more avail:
Paternal love already has betray'd me.
I was the murderer of Xerxes; all
The royal blood I ſought to ſhed; 'tis I

Am

Am guilty, not Arbaces: to his hand,
I, to conceal it, gave the bloody weapon.
His looks proclaim'd his horror for my crime;
His ſilence the compaſſion of a ſon.
O! had not virtue wrought ſo ſtrong in him,
Or love in me, I had fulfill'd my purpoſe,
And had depriv'd thee now of life and empire.

*Artax.* Perfidious wretch! my father haſt thou murder'd,
And made me guilty of Darius' death!
To what exceſſes has thy impious thirſt
Of greatneſs led thee!—Traitor, thou ſhalt die.

*Artab.* At leaſt we'll die together.

[*draws his ſword*, Artaxerxes *does the ſame.*

*Arb.* Heavens!

*Artab.* My friends, [*to the rebels.*
Heed not his threats, the feeble laſt remains
Of deſperation—let the tyrant die.

[*the guards, ſeduced by* Artaban, *prepare to attack* Artaxerxes.

*Arb.* What would'ſt thou do, my father?

*Artab.* Bravely periſh.

*Arb.* Lay by thy ſword, or here I drink my death.

*Artab.* What ſay'ſt thou, ha!

*Arb.* O, if you kill my friend,
My Artaxerxes, I can live no longer.

*Artab.*

*Artab.* Let me complete what I've begun.
[*going to attack* Artaxerxes.

*Arb.* Take heed,
Or here I drink. [*about to drink.*

*Artab.* Hold then, ungrateful ſon!
And doſt thou wiſh to ſee thy father die,
Becauſe too well he lov'd thee? Yes, ingrate,
Yes, thou haſt conquer'd—there—behold my ſword.

[*throws away his ſword, and the rebel guards fly.*

*Man.* Faith unexampled!

*Sem.* Treachery unequall'd!

*Artax.* Purſue the rebels, and let Artaban
Be led to inſtant death.

*Arb.* O Heaven!—yet ſtay;
Have pity, ſir.

*Artax.* Hope not for mercy for him,
His crime's too great: yet think not I confound
The innocent and guilty; thou Arbaces
Shalt wed Mandane, and the fair Semira
With me divide the throne; but for that traitor
No pardon can be granted.

*Arb.* Take my life,
I aſk it not, if by my truth to you,
If, by preſerving you, I kill my father!

*Artax.* O virtue that excites our admiration!

*Arb.* I do not aſk your mercy for myſelf;
Be rigorous ſtill—but change his death for mine.

Hear

Hear him, who once preſerv'd you, at your feet
[*kneels.*
Now kneeling beg to ſuffer for a father.
Thus, thus appeaſe your juſtice, ſhed my blood,
And, ſhedding mine, the blood of Artaban.

*Artax.* O riſe—no more—dry up thoſe generous tears,
Who can reſiſt thee? Artaban ſhall live,
But let him live at leaſt in mournful exile.
Thus far thy ſovereign grants thy pious ſuit;
The virtuous ſon preſerves the guilty father.

CHORUS.

Great King! with reverence Perſia ſees
Mercy ſeated on the throne,
When forgiveneſs ſhe decrees
A hero's loyalty to crown.

Juſtice ſtill we brighter find,
When with godlike Pity join'd!

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

THE

# THE OLYMPIAD.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CLISTHENES, King of SICYON, Father of ARISTEA.

ARISTEA, in love with MEGACLES.

ARGENE, a CRETAN virgin, in the dreſs of a ſhepherdeſs, under the name of LYCORIS, in love with LYCIDAS.

LYCIDAS, in love with ARISTEA, and Friend of MEGACLES.

MEGACLES, in love with ARISTEA, and Friend of LYCIDAS.

AMYNTAS, the Governor of LYCIDAS.

ALCANDER, the Confident of CLISTHENES.

The SCENE lies in the fields of ELIS, near the city of OLYMPIA, on the banks of the river ALPHEUS.

# THE OLYMPIAD.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*The woody part of a deep valley, with high trees that grow upon the oppoſite hills, the branches of the trees meeting overſhade the valley that lies between them.*

LYCIDAS, AMYNTAS.

*Lyc.* Amyntas, I am reſolv'd—forbear to urge
Thy fruitleſs counſels—

*Amyn.* Hear me, Lycidas;
Calm yet a little this tempeſtuous paſſion.

*Lyc.* In whom again ſhall Lycidas confide,
If Megacles deceive him? Megacles,
Even in the greateſt need, deſerts his friend.
Moſt wretched he who truſts his future bliſs
On friendſhip's doubtful faith!

*Amyn.* Be not too raſh
In cenſuring his delay: no little ſpace
Divides fair Elis from the Cretan ſhore
Where Megacles reſides: muſt your impatience
Give wings to him? Perchance your meſſenger
Might linger on his way: the ſea that rolls

His tides between, may ſtay your friend: be calm,
He ſtill may come in time. The Olympic games
Begin not till the ſun has paſs'd the noon,
And ſcarce Aurora yet proclaims the dawn.

*Lyc.* Thou know'ſt that all who hope the victor's prize,
Should with the morn appear within the temple,
To tell their rank, their country, and their name;
And ſwear at Jove's high altar, not to employ
Or fraud or circumvention in the field.

*Amyn.* I know it well.

*Lyc.* Thou know'ſt that he who comes
Too late to execute this ſolemn rite,
Muſt ſtand excluded from the glorious trial.
See'ſt thou not how the combatants already
Throng to the temple? Hear the rural ſhouts
Of eager multitudes; then ſay, Amyntas,
What have I more to expect? What hopes remain?

*Amyn.* But what is your deſign?

*Lyc.* Among the train
To appear before the altar.

*Amyn.* What beſides?

*Lyc.* Prove with the reſt my fortune in the field.

*Amyn.* Thou, Lycidas!

*Lyc.* And doſt thou think my courage
Unequal to the attempt?

*Amyn.* Alas! my prince,

Here

Here nought avails the ſkill in ſanguine fields
To wield the gleaming falchion; other arms,
Far other forms of war muſt here be tried;
Far other arts, the names to us unknown;
The dreadful ceſtus and the ponderous diſk;
Theſe to your rivals are familiar grown,
By frequent exerciſe; but you, untaught,
In the firſt ardor of unthinking youth,
Too late may mourn with them the unequal conflict.

*Lyc.* Had Megacles, expert in arts like theſe,
Arriv'd in time, his valour had ſupplied
The place of Lycidas: but ſince he's abſent,
What elſe remains for me? This day, Amyntas,
The Olympic combatants contend not only
For olive wreaths, the victor's wonted meed;
But Ariſtea is the bright reward;
The royal heir of mighty Cliſthenes;
The firſt and loveliеſt of our Grecian dames,
Whoſe charms have kindled in my breaſt a flame,
That blazes forth even in its infancy.

*Amyn.* What then of Argene?

*Lyc.* Theſe eyes no more
Muſt hope to ſee her: love no longer lives
When hope expires.

*Amyn.* And yet you oft have ſworn—

*Lyc.* I know thy purpoſe, thou would'ſt here detain me

In

In fruitleſs converſe till the hour is paſt.
Farewell.

*Amyn.* Yet hear me.

*Lyc.* No.

*Amyn.* Behold where comes—

*Lyc.* Who comes, Amyntas?

*Amyn.* Megacles.

*Lyc.* Ha! where?

*Amyn.* Between thoſe trees—no—'tis not Megacles.

*Lyc.* Thou doſt but mock me; and indeed, Amyntas,
I well deſerve it, who could blindly place
My hope in Megacles. [*going.*

## SCENE II.

*Enter* MEGACLES.

*Amyn.* Behold him here—

*Lyc.* Ye righteous powers!

*Mega.* My prince!

*Lyc.* My friend! O come,
Come to my breaſt: my hopes again revive.

*Mega.* And is it true that Heaven affords me once
The means to ſhow the gratitude I owe you?

*Lyc.*

*Lyc.* Yes, thou canſt give me happineſs and life.

*Mega.* Say, how?

*Lyc.* By entering on the Olympic games
Beneath my name, and combating for me.

*Mega.* Are you in Elis yet unknown?

*Lyc.* I am.

*Mega.* By this device what would you ſeek?

*Lyc.* My peace.
O Heaven! let us not waſte the time—this hour
The rival combatants muſt give their names.
Fly to the temple; ſay thou art Lycidas;
If thou delay'ſt, thy coming here is vain;
Go—I will tell thee all at thy return.

*Mega.* With ſecret pride, my friend, I go
The name of Lycidas to wear;
That all the much-lov'd name may know,
Which ever in my heart I bear.

Obſerving Greece henceforth ſhall ſay,
Our thoughts, or actions are the ſame;
Our hearts the like affections ſway,
Nor have we differ'd even in name. [*Exit.*

## SCENE III.

LYCIDAS, AMYNTAS.

*Lyc.* O generous friend! O faithful Megacles!

*Amyn.*

*Amyn.* It was not thus you ſpoke of him but now.

*Lyc.* View me at length poſſeſs'd of Ariſtea:
Go, dear Amyntas, ſee that all's prepar'd;
I, with my ſpouſe, will ere the cloſe of day
Depart from Elis.

*Amyn.* Prince, be not ſo ready
To fancy happineſs: you yet have much
To fear; your artifice may be diſcover'd;
Or in the trial Megacles may fail.
I know he ever has been found victorious;
Yet well I know an unforeſeen event
Sometimes confounds the coward and the brave:
Nor virtue always meets the ſame ſucceſs.

*Lyc.* Why would'ſt thou ſeek to trouble me in vain
With thy perpetual doubts? So near the port
Would'ſt thou perſuade me ſtill to dread a ſtorm!
The man who blindly liſtens to thy fears,
Will doubt of morning light, or evening ſhade.

The ſteed, approaching to the goal,
His eager courſe impatient ſpeeds;
No more obeys the rein's control,
The chiding voice no longer heeds.

Thus, fill'd with hopes, the exulting breaſt
No dread can know, no counſel hear;
But ſeems of preſent joy poſſeſt,
To think that happineſs is near. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE IV.

*A ſpacious country at the foot of a hill, covered over with paſtoral cottages. A bridge acroſs the river* ALPHEUS, *compoſed of trunks of trees. Between the trees, that grow upon the plain, is a proſpect of the city of* OLYMPIA *at a diſtance.*

ARGENE *in the dreſs of a ſhepherdeſs, weaving garlands. Chorus of nymphs and ſhepherds, all buſied in paſtoral employments.*

CHORUS.

Hail! peaceful ſhades, dear pleaſing ſeat!
Hail happy freedom's ſure retreat!

*Arg.* No fraud here lurks with foul deſign
Our pleaſures to deſtroy;
But conſtancy and love combine
To heighten every joy.

CHORUS.

Hail! peaceful ſhades, dear pleaſing ſeat!
Hail happy freedom's ſure retreat!

*Arg.* Here each of little ſtore poſſeſt,
Content with little lives;
Rich in himſelf, his tranquil breaſt
No poverty perceives.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Hail! peaceful ſhades, dear pleaſing ſeat!
Hail happy freedom's ſure retreat!

*Arg.* Without or guards or ſtrong-built hold,
Our peace is here ſecure;
No treaſur'd heaps of tempting gold
The midnight thief allure.

CHORUS.

Hail! peaceful ſhades, dear pleaſing ſeat!
Hail happy freedom's ſure retreat!

*Arg.* Here undiſguis'd the ſimple loves
Of nymphs—

No more—for Ariſtea comes [*riſing, the nymphs and ſhepherds go out.*

## SCENE V.

*Enter* ARISTEA *attended.*

*Ariſ.* Lycoris,
Purſue your harmleſs paſtime.

*Arg.* Doſt thou, princeſs,
Return to bleſs again my poor abode?

*Ariſ.* O that I could as well avoid myſelf
As I can fly from others! Ah! my friend,
Thou little think'ſt how fatal is this day
To Ariſtea.

*Arg.* Rather ſay this day

Is

Is glorious to you! Of your matchleſs beauty
What ampler proofs can future times receive?
To win you all the flower of Greece this day
Meet in th' Olympic liſts.

*Ariſ.* He whom alone
I wiſh to find, alas! he is not there.
But let us change to ſome more pleaſing theme;
Again reſume your interrupted taſks.
Lycoris ſit, and let me hear thee ſpeak:
Thou didſt begin to tell me all thy fortunes;
Purſue the ſtory now; with thy lov'd converſe,
Aſſuage awhile my pains; and if thou canſt,
By telling thy afflictions, ſoften mine. [*they ſit.*

*Arg.* If aught from me has power to charm your grief,
Then are my ſufferings not without reward.
Already have I told you that my name
Is Argene, that Crete beheld me born
Of noble blood, that my affections ſoar'd
A higher flight than even my birth could claim.

*Ariſ.* Thus far I have learn'd.

*Arg.* Hear whence my woes began.
On Lycidas, the princely heir of Crete,
I fix'd my love, and was again belov'd.
Awhile with prudence we conceal'd our flames:
Till paſſion ſtrengthening, as it oft befalls,
And prudence growing weak, ſome watchful eye
Perceiv'd at length, and read our mutual glances:

The

The tale to others flew; from tongue to tongue
The rumour ſpreading reach'd the royal ear.
The king with anger heard, rebuk'd his ſon,
And ſternly bade him never ſee me more;
And thus by oppoſition but increas'd
His wiſh to ſee me; ſo the fanning wind
Adds ſtrength to fire; ſo rivers higher ſwell,
In ſtraiten'd bounds. Impatient with his love
The frantic Lycidas reſolv'd to fly
And bear me thence by force; his whole deſign
To me he ſent, the meſſenger betray'd
His truſt, and gave the letters to the king.
My hapleſs lover then was cloſe confin'd,
And I commanded to a foreign huſband
To give my hand, which I refus'd to obey.
Againſt me all declar'd; the monarch threaten'd,
My friends condemn'd me, and my father oft
Urg'd me to accept the nuptials: nothing now
Could ſave me but determin'd flight or death.
Of theſe I choſe the firſt, which prudence ſeem'd
To point, and nature leaſt recoil'd to follow.
Unknown I came to Elis: in theſe woods
I purpos'd to reſide, 'midſt ſhepherds here
A rural nymph, I now am call'd Lycoris.
But in the faithful boſom of Lycoris,
I cheriſh ſtill the heart of Argene.

*Ariſ.* Indeed I pity thee; but cannot yet
Approve thy flight; a virgin and alone
To ſeek a diſtant country—to forſake—

*Arg.*

*Arg.* And ſhould I then have yielded up my hand
To Megacles?

*Ariſ.* To Megacles!—O Heaven!
Declare what Megacles was this?

*Arg.* The huſband
For whom the king deſign'd me: ought I then
To have forgotten—

*Ariſ.* Know'ſt thou not his country?

*Arg.* Athens.

*Ariſ.* What cauſe had brought him into Crete?

*Arg.* The cauſe was love; for ſo himſelf declar'd.
A band of robbers, at his firſt arrival,
Attack'd, and had depriv'd him of his life,
But Lycidas by chance came by and ſav'd him.
Since which they ſtill have liv'd in ſtricteſt friendſhip:
This friend of Lycidas, known to the king,
Was, as a ſtranger, by the royal mandate
Decreed for me.

*Ariſ.* But doſt thou yet remember
His aſpect?

*Arg.* Yes, methinks I ſee him preſent.
Fair were his ſhining locks, his eyebrows dark,
His lips of ruddieſt hue, and gently ſwelling;
His looks ſedate, and full of tenderneſs;
A frequent ſmile, a pleaſing ſpeech—but princeſs,

Your colour changes—ſay—what can this mean?

*Ariſ.* O Heaven! that Megacles whom you deſcribe,
Is him I love.

*Arg.* What ſay'ſt thou?

*Ariſ.* O! 'tis true:
In ſecret long he lov'd me; but my father
Refus'd my hand to one in Athens born:
Nay would not hear or even vouchſafe to ſee him.
He left me in deſpair, and never ſince
Have I beheld him; but from thee I learn
What has befallen him ſince.

*Arg.* Our fortunes both
Are ſurely wondrous.

*Ariſ.* Could he now be told
That here I am made the prize of victory.

*Arg.* Diſpatch ſome truſty meſſenger to Crete,
To give him notice: thou meantime, procure
The games to be delay'd.

*Ariſ.* Say how, my friend?

*Arg.* Great Cliſthenes is Ariſtea's father;
'Tis he preſides, th' elected judge, to rule
The ſolemn rites; he if he will can change—

*Ariſ.* But, ah! he will not.

*Arg.* Yet, what harm, my princeſs,
Springs from the trial?

*Ariſ.* Haſte then, let us go

And

And find out Cliſthenes. [*both riſing.*

*Arg.* Forbear——He's here.

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* CLISTHENES *attended.*

*Cliſ.* My daughter, every thing is now prepar'd;
The names are gather'd, and the victims ſlain,
The hour of combat fix'd; nor can we longer
Defer the games without offending Heaven,
The faith of nations, and thy father's honour.

*Ariſ.* Fond hopes, farewell! [*aſide.*

*Cliſ.* O! I ſhould give thee cauſe
For pride indeed, did I diſcloſe the rivals
That ſeek to combat for thy ſake. Megara
Olinthus ſends; Clearchus comes from Sparta;
From Thebes her Atys; Erylus from Corinth;
From Crete's fam'd iſle the youthful Lycidas.

*Arg.* Who?

*Cliſ.* Lycidas, the Cretan monarch's ſon.

*Ariſ.* Does he too ſeek me?

*Cliſ.* Yes; he comes to prove
His fate with others.

*Arg.* Has he then ſo ſoon
Forgot his once-lov'd Argene? [*aſide.*

*Cliſ.* My daughter,
Let us be gone.

*Arif.* Grant my requeſt, my father,
Delay the combat for awhile.

*Clif.* Impoſſible!
But wherefore ſhould'ſt thou aſk it? What can urge
This ſtrange deſire?

*Arif.* 'Tis ever time enough
To barter freedom: marriage to our ſex
Is but a galling yoke; and ſure we ſuffer
Enough of evil in our ſervile ſtate,
Without the nuptial tie.

*Clif.* Such is the language
Of womankind; but falſely they complain.

No longer murmur that your fate
Ungently dooms you to obey;
Since even in your ſubjected ſtate,
You rule o'er us with ſovereign ſway.

While we in fortitude tranſcend,
You boaſt reſiſtleſs beauty's arms:
In vain would feeble man contend;
For courage yields to female charms. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VII.

ARGENE, ARISTEA.

*Arg.* And didſt thou, princeſs, hear?

*Arif.* My friend, farewell!

I muſt

I muſt attend my father: thou who know'ſt
Of my dear Megacles, O if thy heart
Be gentle as thy looks, in kind compaſſion
Procure me tidings of the man I love.

Ah! ſeek to know what land detains
The object of my care:
If ſtill his breaſt unchang'd remains,
If I his converſe ſhare.

Enquire if e'er he gently ſighs
At mention of my name;
If e'er, when tender paſſions riſe,
His lips his thoughts proclaim. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

ARGENE *alone.*

Has then ungrateful Lycidas ſo ſoon
Forgot his vows? Unhappy Argene!
To what have thy offended ſtars reſerv'd thee!
Learn, unexperienc'd virgins, learn from me:
Behold the practice of deceitful men!
Each calls you ſtill his life, his ſoul, his treaſure;
Each ſwears the dear remembrance of your charms
Beguiles the day, and waſtes the midnight hours:
All arts are theirs: they can turn pale and weep,
Before your ſight ſeem ready to expire:
But heed them not—they are diſſemblers all.

Amidſt a thouſand hope not e'er
One heart ſincere to find;
Though each, in preſence of the fair,
May boaſt a conſtant mind.

By cuſtom now is grown deſpis'd
The faithful lover's name;
And conſtancy, that once was priz'd,
Is made the lover's ſhame. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

LYCIDAS, MEGACLES *meeting.*

*Mega.* My Lycidas!

*Lyc.* My friend!

*Mega.* Behold me here——

*Lyc.* Haſt thou completed——

*Mega.* Every thing is done.
I, in thy ſtead, have viſited the temple,
And, in thy place, ſhall ſoon begin the trial;
Then, ere the ſignal for the ſtrife is given,
Thou may'ſt diſcloſe the bent of thy deſign.

*Lyc.* O! ſhould'ſt thou conquer, all the realm of Love
Has not a lover happier than myſelf.

*Mega.* What mean'ſt thou?

*Lyc.* To reward the victor's toils
A maid is promis'd of tranſcendent charms,

And

And royal birth: theſe eyes had ſcarce beheld her
When my heart glow'd, and panted to poſſeſs her:
But little vers'd in theſe athletic games——

*Mega.* I underſtand you—I for you muſt win her.

*Lyc.* Even ſo, my friend—demand my life, my kingdom,
Whate'er I have, my Megacles, is thine,
And all too little to return thy friendſhip.

*Mega.* There need not, prince, ſuch motives to incite
A grateful vaſſal, and a faithful friend:
To thee I owe my life; then hope the beſt;
I truſt thou ſhalt poſſeſs thy wiſh'd-for bride.
I come no ſtranger to the field; ere this
My labours have bedew'd the ſands of Elis:
Nor is the ſylvan olive to theſe brows
An unaccuſtom'd wreath; and never yet
This breaſt was more ſecure of victory:
The thirſt of honour, and the warmth of friendſhip,
Add ſtrength to every nerve: I pant with ardor,
And ſeem already in the glorious trial.
Methinks I ſee each rival combatant,
Methinks I conquer! From the trampled plain
My locks and face with duſt are cover'd o'er,
And ſhouts of pleas'd ſpectators fill my ears.

*Lyc.* O my lov'd friend! O deareſt Ariſtea!

*Mega.* What ſay'ſt thou, ha!



293167B

*Lyc.* I call by name on her
My ſoul adores.

*Mega.* And nam'ſt thou Ariſtea?

*Lyc.* I do.

*Mega.* What Ariſtea?

*Lyc.* Ariſtea,
Born on Aſopus' banks, the only off-ſpring
Of royal Cliſthenes.

*Mega.* O Heaven! 'tis ſhe,
'Tis ſhe I love! [*aſide.*]—And muſt we fight for her?

*Lyc.* For her.

*Mega.* Is this the virgin I muſt gain you,
By conquering here?

*Lyc.* The ſame.

*Mega.* Is Ariſtea
Your hope, your comfort?

*Lyc.* O! ſhe's all to me.

*Mega.* I feel the ſtroke of death! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* Be not ſurpris'd:
When thou ſhalt ſee the beauties of that face,
Thou wilt perhaps excuſe me: Gods themſelves,
Without a bluſh, might own a paſſion there.

*Mega.* Too well I know it. [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* Should'ſt thou prove victorious,
Can there be found one happier than myſelf?
Even Megacles ſhall triumph in my joy:

Wilt thou not ſympathize in my delight?

*Mega.* Doubtleſs.

*Lyc.* And wilt thou not, my friend, eſteem
The moment bleſt that gives me Ariſtea?

*Mega.* Moſt bleſt—O Gods! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* And will not Megacles
Grace with his preſence theſe auſpicious nuptials?

*Mega.* Diſtraction! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* Speak.

*Mega.* I have no will but yours.
What unknown miſery, what hell is this! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* How tedious ſeems the day! Alas! thou know'ſt not,
Or canſt not ſure believe, that expectation
Is death to one who loves, and loves like me.

*Mega.* I know it well.

*Lyc.* Yes, Megacles, even now
My thoughts call up futurity: already
In fancy I poſſeſs my beauteous bride.

*Mega.* This is too much. [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* Methinks I ſeem——

*Mega.* No more——
You've ſaid enough; I own the name of friend,
And know the duties which that name imports:
Yet think not therefore——

*Lyc.* Why are you diſpleas'd?
In what have I offended?

*Mega.*

*Mega.* Inconſiderate!
What have I done!——[*aſide.*] This tranſport
ſprings from zeal
To do you ſervice: hither am I come
Tir'd with a length of way, the fight draws near,
But little time remains for my repoſe,
And of that little you would now deprive me.

*Lyc.* What hinder'd thee before to ſpeak thy thoughts?

*Mega.* Reſpect reſtrain'd my tongue.

*Lyc.* Then would'ſt thou reſt?

*Mega.* I would.

*Lyc.* Shall we from hence retire together?

*Mega.* No, Lycidas.

*Lyc.* Then wilt thou ſtill remain
Beneath theſe ſhades?

*Mega.* I will.

*Lyc.* Shall not thy friend
Attend thee here?

*Mega.* O no. [*impatiently.*

*Lyc.* What can this mean! [*aſide.*
Farewell, and may'ſt thou find thy wiſh'd repoſe!

Still while you ſleep, with pleaſing themes
May Love inſpire your peaceful dreams,
And whiſper how I'm bleſt!
May yonder ſtream more ſilent flow,
And every zephyr gentler blow,
To ſooth my friend to reſt. [*Exit.*

## SCENE X.

MEGACLES *alone.*

Ye gracious powers! What tidings have I heard?
What unexpected ſtroke is fallen upon me!
Shall ſhe I love become another's right,
And I reſign her to my rival's arms?
But, O! that rival is my deareſt friend!
How ſtrangely for my torment fate unites
Two names ſo oppoſite! Yet ſure the laws
Of friendſhip never can exact ſo much;
Forgive me, prince, I am a lover too.
To aſk me to reſign my Ariſtea,
Is but to aſk my life—And does not then
This life belong to Lycidas who ſav'd it?
Do I not breathe through him? And canſt thou doubt,
Ungrateful Megacles! Should Ariſtea
E'er know thee thus forgetful of thy friendſhip,
Even ſhe might juſtly hate thee. Never, never
Shall ſhe be witneſs to this change—the laws
Of faith and amity alone I'll hear,
Of gratitude and honour. All I dread
Is to behold her; let me ſhun th' encounter;
How ſhall I meet her ſight! To think of it,
My heart beats quick, cold ſweats bedew my face,
I tremble,—I am loſt!—I cannot bear it.

SCENE

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* ARISTEA.

*Arif.* Stranger. [*without ſeeing his face.*

*Mega.* Ha! who is this that breaks upon me? [*turning.*

*Arif.* O Heaven! [*ſees* Megacles.

*Mega.* O Gods! [*ſees* Ariſtea.

*Arif.* My Megacles! My life!
And is it thee, do I again behold thee!
Ye powers! I faint with joy, my tender breaſt
Can ſcarce ſupport this mighty tide of pleaſure.
Thou deareſt object of my conſtant wiſhes,
So long bewail'd, ſo long invok'd in vain!
At length thou hear'ſt thy faithful Ariſtea;
Thou art return'd in a propitious hour;
O happy ſufferings! O indulgent love!
My ſighs and tears are amply now repaid.

*Mega.* How cruel is my fate! [*aſide.*

*Arif.* Thou anſwer'ſt not,
My much lov'd Megacles! Still art thou ſilent!
Why does thy colour change? What mean thoſe looks
Confus'd? Why ſeem thy eyes to ſhun me thus?
Whence is that ſtarting tear? Perhaps, alas!
No longer I poſſeſs thy love—perhaps—

*Mega.*

*Mega.* What ſay'ſt thou!—Ever ſtill—know then, I am—
I cannot ſpeak—What wretchedneſs is mine! [*aſide.*

*Ariſ.* Thou chill'ſt me to the ſoul: and know'ſt thou not
That here for me the combatants contend?

*Mega.* I know it well.

*Ariſ.* And com'ſt not thou to enter
The liſts for Ariſtea's ſake?

*Mega.* I do.

*Ariſ.* Why are you then ſo ſad?

*Mega.* Becauſe—O Gods!
What torment equals mine!

*Ariſ.* I underſtand thee:
Some envious tongue has made thee doubt my truth:
If this afflict thee, thou art indeed unjuſt;
For never, Megacles, ſince laſt we parted,
Have I even ſinn'd in thought againſt my love.
Thy voice has ſeem'd for ever in my ears;
My lips have dwelt for ever on thy name;
My heart retain'd thy image: never yet
I've felt a ſecond flame: thy Ariſtea—

*Mega.* Enough—I know it well—

*Ariſ.* Thy Ariſtea,
Shall ſooner die than for a ſingle moment
Forego her plighted faith.

*Mega.*

*Mega.* Diſtracting thought! [*aſide.*

*Ariſ.* But look upon me—ſpeak—

*Mega.* What can I ſay?

## SCENE XII.

*Enter* ALCANDER *in haſte.*

*Alc.* My lord, diſpatch, if here you come to fight;
The ſignal's given, that to the glorious trial,
Invites the combatants. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIII.

MEGACLES, ARISTEA.

*Mega.* Aſſiſt me Gods!
Farewell, my love!

*Ariſ.* And wilt thou leave me thus?
Yet go—return my huſband; I forgive thee.

*Mega.* Such happineſs is not reſerv'd for me.
[*going.*

*Ariſ.* Hear me, doſt thou ſtill love me?

*Mega.* More than life.

*Ariſ.* Doſt thou believe me true?

*Mega.* Thy truth I think
Unſullied as thy beauty.

*Ariſ.* Go'ſt thou not
To conquer, and to win me?

*Mega.*

*Mega.* I would hope it.

*Arif.* And doſt thou ſtill poſſeſs thy wonted valour?

*Mega.* I truſt, I do.

*Arif.* And thou wilt gain the prize?

*Mega.* I hope for victory.

*Arif.* Then am not I,
Dear Megacles, thy ſpouſe?

*Mega.* My life, adieu.

In thy future happy days,
Think on him who lov'd ſo well.

*Arif.* Tell me what thy grief can raiſe,
Tell me, love, thy conſort tell.

*Mega.* Ceaſe, ceaſe, thou idol of my heart.

*Arif.* Speak, Megacles, thy thoughts diſcloſe.

*Both.* { Alas! by ſpeaking / Alas! by ſilence } you impart
New troubles that increaſe my woes.

*Arif.* While thus I ſee my lover mourn,
In vain the cauſe I ſeek.

*Mega.* With jealouſy, I rage, I burn,
Yet, ah! I dare not ſpeak.

*Both.* What hearts could e'er before ſuſtain
Such fatal grief, ſuch cruel pain!

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ARISTEA, ARGENE.

*Arg.* No tidings of the combat yet arriv'd?

*Arif.* No, beauteous Argene: the law is hard
That ſuffers not our ſex to be ſpectators.

*Arg.* Alas! 'twere greater pain, perhaps, to ſee
The man we love expos'd in ſuch a conflict,
Nor have it in our power to give him ſuccour,
Yet to be preſent—

*Arif.* I methinks am preſent
Though abſent far: even now my labouring mind
Forms things that are not. Could'ſt thou ſee this heart;
The combat's here, my friend, here, here it rages
More than in yonder field: before my eyes
I ſee the liſts, I ſee my Megacles,
The judges and contending combatants!
Imagination paints his rivals ſtronger,
His judges partial: doubly in my ſoul
I feel whate'er he feels: the cruel blows,
The threats, the inſulting ſhouts——O! were I preſent,
I ſhould but fear the truth; while thus in abſence,
My anxious thoughts create a thouſand dangers,
And what is not, and is, alike I fear.

*Arg.* No meſſenger as yet appears— [*looking out.*

*Arif.*

*Arif.* None yet—
O Heaven!

*Arg.* What can this mean?

*Arif.* Alas! I doubt!
How my heart trembles!

*Arg.* Whence this mighty tumult?

*Arif.* My fate's decided—See, Alcander comes.

*Arg.* O! haſte Alcander, haſte to give us comfort;
What news?

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ALCANDER.

*Alc.* Moſt fortunate! The king, O princeſs!
Sends me to you the harbinger of joy.
And I—

*Arif.* Are the games finiſh'd?

*Alc.* Yes; they are.

*Arg.* Declare the victor.

*Alc.* I'll relate the whole:
Already now the impatient gazing crowd—

*Arif.* All this I aſk not.

*Alc.* Let me yet relate—

*Arif.* Say, who has conquer'd?

*Alc.* Lycidas has conquer'd.

*Arif.* Ha! Lycidas!

*Alc.*

*Alc.* The ſame.

*Arg.* The prince of Crete?

*Alc.* Yes, he who lately landed on theſe ſhores.

*Ariſ.* Ill fated Ariſtea! [*aſide.*

*Arg.* Wretched Argene! [*aſide.*

*Alc.* Moſt happy princeſs! What a noble conſort
Has fate allotted thee!

*Ariſ.* Alcander, leave us.

*Alc.* The king expects you.

*Ariſ.* Leave us—I will follow.

*Alc.* He waits your coming in the ſacred temple,
Where now aſſembled—

*Ariſ.* Wherefore go'ſt thou not?

*Alc.* Is this the recompenſe my tidings find!
[*aſide.*] [*Exit.*

## SCENE III.

ARISTEA, ARGENE.

*Arg.* Ah! tell me, princeſs, is there under Heaven
One, O ye powers! more hopeleſs than myſelf?

*Ariſ.* Yes, Argene, that wretch am I!

*Arg.* O never
May love on thee inflict the pangs I feel!
Thou know'ſt not what I've loſt; how dear that heart

Had coſt me, which thou now haſt raviſh'd from me.

*Ariſ.* Nor canſt thou judge the torments I endure.

I grant the ſufferings great you prove,
You loſe the object of your love;
But yet may freely vent your grief,
And ſeek from pity ſome relief:
While I, by ruthleſs Fortune croſt,
Behold myſelf and lover loſt;
Yet cannot, midſt my woes, retain
The wretched freedom to complain. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* AMYNTAS.

*Arg.* [*to herſelf.*] And muſt I neither pity find nor ſuccour?

*Amyn.* Almighty powers! Sure Argene appears
In yonder form!

*Arg.* At leaſt revenge, revenge
May be procur'd. [*going.*

*Amyn.* Thou, Argene, in Elis!
Why here, and here alone in homely weeds?

*Arg.* Art thou too come to aſſiſt the black deſigns
Of thy perfidious prince? The Cretan king
Has doubtleſs to a ſage conductor given
The care of Lycidas! Behold the fruit

Of

Of thy inſtructions! Glory then, Amyntas,
To ſee thy pains ſucceed: who ſeeks at full
To know the tiller's care, muſt mark the ſoil.

*Amyn.* Already has ſhe heard—[*aſide.*] Not my advice—

*Arg.* Enough—no more—In Heaven there ſtill is juſtice
For all, and may ſometimes be found on earth:
I will implore it both from men and Gods;
My rage ſhall, like his falſehood, keep no bounds.
To Cliſthenes, to Greece, to all the world
I'll publiſh he's a traitor: infamy
Shall ſtill purſue his ſteps, that every one
May hate, may ſhun him, and with juſt abhorrence
May point him out to all that know him not.

*Amyn.* Theſe thoughts are ſure unworthy Argene.
Anger, though juſt, is yet a treacherous guide.
Were I as thee I'd prove more gentle methods.
Contrive that he may ſee thee, ſpeak to him,
Recall his promiſes to his remembrance;
'Tis ever better to regain a lover,
Than to ſubdue a foe.

*Arg.* And doſt thou think
That e'er Amyntas he'll return to me?

*Amyn.* I hope at leaſt—thou wert his only joy,
For thee he languiſh'd, died for thee; remember,
Has he not vow'd a thouſand times—

*Arg.*

*Arg.* Remember!
I for my ſorrow recollect it all.

What ſaid he not one fatal day?
What God did not atteſt?
And can he then, ye powers, betray
The faith he once profeſs'd?

For him I every bleſſing ſpurn,
Yet now he flies my ſight;
And wilt thou, love, with this return,
A conſtant heart requite? [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

AMYNTAS *alone.*

Unthinking ſtate of youth! when I behold thee
Expos'd to every giddy change of love,
I find new comfort in the calm of years.
'Tis ever grateful from the ſhore to view
The diſtant wreck; not that we take delight
In other's woe, but that the mind with pleaſure
Contemplates ills from which ourſelves are free.
Yet hold—and has not hoary age its ſtorms?
Alas! too many; nor is even exempt
From dread of others: though the name may change,
Folly is folly ſtill; each age is rul'd
By love or hate, by anger or deſire.

We're veſſels left to wander wide
Amidſt a rough and ſtormy tide;
Our furious paſſions that prevail,
Are dangerous winds that ſwell the ſail;
Our life's the ſea on which we ſteer,
And pleaſure is the rock we fear.

Though like a wary pilot now
Her watchful ſtation Reaſon keeps;
Yet ſoon the waves may ſtronger grow,
And whirl us headlong o'er the deeps.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

CLISTHENES *preceded by* LYCIDAS, ALCANDER, *and* MEGACLES *wearing an olive crown. Chorus of wreſtlers, Guards and People.*

CHORUS.

Than Lycidas a nobler name
For fortitude renown'd,
Did ne'er along his winding ſtream
Alpheus' ſhores reſound.

CHORUS. PART I.

No hero e'er more bravely ſtood,
In combat hand to hand;
No mightier labours e'er bedew'd
The fam'd Olympic ſand.

CHORUS. PART II.

Minerva's arts are his in fight,
The wings of Love in ſpeed;
Not Phœbus' or Alcides' might
Can Lycidas exceed.

CHORUS.

Such worth, ſuch valorous deeds diſplay'd,
For ages ſhall endure:
No time with dark oblivion's ſhade
Such honours ſhall obſcure.

*Clif.* Brave youth! who 'midſt thy glory ſtill retain'ſt
Thy graceful modeſty; permit me now
To preſs thee thus with fondneſs to my boſom.
O happy king of Crete! who could give birth
To ſuch a ſon as thee! O had I ſtill
Preſerv'd my ſon Philinthus, he perhaps
Had been like this—[*to* Alcander.] Alcander thou remember'ſt
With what affliction I conſign'd him to thee;
But yet—

*Alc.* It now avails not to revive
Misfortunes paſt.

*Clif.* 'Tis true—My Ariſtea [*to* Megacles.
Shall recompenſe thy worth: if Cliſthenes
Has aught beſides to give, demand it freely:
Thou canſt not aſk what I'd refuſe to grant.

*Mega.* Be firm, my heart!—[*aſide.*] My lord,
I am a ſon,
And have a tender father; every pleaſure
I ſhare not with him loſes half its value:
I would be firſt to bear the tidings to him
Of all that has befallen me; I would aſk
The ſanction of his will for my eſpouſals;
And in his preſence give my hand in Crete
To Ariſtea.

*Clif.* Thy deſire is juſt.

*Mega.* With your permiſſion I will now depart:
But, in my ſtead, I leave this friend behind
The guardian and conductor of my bride.
[*preſenting* Lycidas.

*Clif.* What can thoſe features mean? While I
behold them.
A ſtrange emotion runs through every vein!
[*aſide.*
Declare, what youth is this.

*Mega.* His name's Egyſthus;
His country Crete; he to the royal blood
Is near allied; but friendſhip more than blood
Unites our ſouls; ſo equal are our thoughts,
In every grief or joy alike we ſhare,
And naming Lycidas you name Egyſthus.

*Lyc.* Ingenious friendſhip! [*aſide.*

*Clif.* Let Egyſthus then
Conduct thy ſpouſe: but ſurely Lycidas
Will

Will not depart without one interview.

*Mega.* O no—this meeting muſt be dreadful to me,
For parting would be death: I feel already
The pangs of ſuffering—

*Clif.* Ariſtea's here.

*Mega.* Unhappy me! [*aſide.*

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* ARISTEA.

*Arif.* To theſe deteſted nuptials
I come, even as a victim to the altar. [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* Thoſe heavenly charms will ſoon be mine for ever! [*aſide.*

*Clif.* Draw near, my daughter: look, behold thy huſband. [*preſenting* Megacles.

*Mega.* Ah! were it ſo! [*aſide.*

*Arif.* My huſband! [*ſees* Megacles.

*Clif.* Yes; confeſs
A fairer tie was never form'd by Heaven.

*Arif.* If Lycidas has conquer'd, can my love—
My father's ſure deceiv'd. [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* She thinks her huſband
Is Lycidas, and hence her trouble ſprings. [*aſide.*

*Arif.* Is this the victor, father?

*Clif.* Canſt thou aſk it?

Doſt

Doſt thou not know him by his looks? His face
Beſmear'd with duſt, bedew'd with honour'd toils?
That leafy wreath, the glorious ornament
Of him who triumphs?

*Arif.* Said'ſt thou not, Alcander—

*Alc.* I ſaid the truth, O princeſs!

*Clif.* Doubt no longer:
Behold the ſpouſe to whom thou art join'd by Heav'n;
And never could a father's love obtain
A nobler from the indulgent Gods.

*Arif.* O tranſport! [*aſide.*

*Mega.* O torture! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* Happy day! [*aſide.*

*Clif.* What! neither ſpeak!
Whence is this ſilence?

*Mega.* Heavens!—What ſhall I ſay!

*Arif.* Fain would I ſpeak but—

*Clif.* Well I underſtand thee,
My preſence is ungrateful: majeſty,
The ſtern demeanour of the king and father,
Accords but ill with love. I know how irkſome
To me were ſuch reſtraints: remain together,
I praiſe the modeſty that keeps you thus
In mutual ſilence,

*Mega.* Still my fate's more wretched! [*aſide.*

*Clif.*

*Clif.* I know that Love's a boy, and flies
The converſe of the grave and wiſe;
Delights in gameſome toys, but fears
The rigid frown of hoary years:
For diſtant awe can ne'er agree
With frolick mirth and liberty. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

ARISTEA, MEGACLES, LYCIDAS.

*Mega.* O whither ſhall I turn, divided thus
Between my friend and love! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* 'Tis time I now
Reveal myſelf to Ariſtea. [*to* Megacles.

*Mega.* Stay—— [*to him.*
O Heaven! [*aſide.*

*Arif.* My lord, my huſband, from thy wife
Conceal thy grief no longer.

*Mega.* Cruel fate! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* My friend, my love admits no more delay.
[*to* Megacles *aſide.*

*Arif.* Thy ſilence, deareſt Megacles, diſtracts me.

*Mega.* Yet hold, my heart; complete thy ſacrifice: [*aſide.*
Vouchſafe, O prince! one moment to retire.
[*to* Lycidas.

*Lyc.* Retire! Say, wherefore——

*Mega.*

*Mega.* Go: confide in me.
I muſt diſcloſe the whole to Ariſtea.

*Lyc.* But may not I be preſent?

*Mega.* No: this converſe
Imports far more than thou may'ſt think——

*Lyc.* 'Tis well;
Thou bid'ſt and I obey: I'll not be far,
An inſtant may recall me——Think, my friend,
For what, for whom thou ſpeak'ſt: if Lycidas
Has e'er deſerv'd thy gratitude and love,
Now prove it; to thy faithful aid I truſt
My peace, my life. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

MEGACLES, ARISTEA.

*Mega.* O cruel recollection!

*Ariſ.* At length we are alone, and I may now,
Without conſtraint, give vent to joy; may call thee
My hope, my treaſure, my delight——

*Mega.* No, princeſs;
Thoſe rapturous names are not for me: reſerve them
To grace ſome happier lover.

*Ariſ.* And is this
A time for ſuch diſcourſe? this happy day——
But thoughtleſs as I am thou doſt but mock me;

I am to blame to be alarm'd.

*Mega.* Alas!
Thou haſt but too much cauſe——

*Ariſ.* Explain thyſelf.

*Mega.* Hear then; but rouze thy courage, Ariſtea:
Prepare thy ſoul to give th' extremeſt proof
Of dauntleſs virtue.

*Ariſ.* Speak, what would'ſt thou ſay?
How my heart trembles!

*Mega.* Haſt thou not declar'd
A thouſand times, 'twas not my form that won thee,
But that ſincerity, that grateful mind,
That ſoul of honour which inſpir'd my thoughts?

*Ariſ.* Moſt true indeed: ſuch didſt thou ſeem to me;
As ſuch I know thee yet, as ſuch adore thee.

*Mega.* Should Megacles e'er change from what thou knew'ſt him,
Be falſe to friendſhip, perjur'd to the Gods,
Forget the benefits conferr'd upon him,
And give him death to whom he owes his life;
Say, couldſt thou love him ſtill? permit him ſtill
To woo thee, or receive him for thy huſband?

*Ariſ.* And doſt thou think that I can e'er ſuppoſe
My Megacles ſo loſt to every virtue?

*Mega.*

*Mega.* Know then, by fate's decree, that Megacles
Muſt be this wretch if e'er he prove thy huſband.

*Arif.* What haſt thou ſaid?

*Mega.* Now hear the fatal ſecret.
The prince of Crete, who languiſh'd for thy charms,
Implor'd my pity; 'twas to him I ow'd
My life preſerv'd: ah! princeſs, judge thyſelf,
Could I refuſe——

*Arif.* And thou haſt fought——

*Mega.* For him.

*Arif.* And wilt thou loſe me thus?

*Mega.* Yes, to maintain
Myſelf ſtill worthy of thee.

*Arif.* Muſt I then——

*Mega.* Thou muſt complete my work: O Ariſtea!
Confirm the dictates of a grateful heart.
Yes, generous maid, let Lycidas henceforth
Be what till now thy Megacles has been;
To him transfer thy love: my friend deſerves
This happineſs: I live within his breaſt;
Nor can I deem thee loſt, if he has gain'd thee.

*Arif.* Diſtracting change! I fall from higheſt Heaven
To deepeſt Hell—A paſſion, pure as mine,
Deſerves a better fate—Alas! without thee
Life is not life!

*Mega.* O beauteous Ariſtea!

Do

Do not thou too conſpire againſt my virtue.
Already has it coſt me dear to form
This dreadful reſolution: one ſoft moment
Deſtroys the glorious work.

*Arif.* To leave me thus——

*Mega.* I have reſolv'd——

*Arif.* Haſt thou reſolv'd? And when?

*Mega.* This is the laſt——How ſhall I live to ſpeak it?
This is the laſt farewell.

*Arif.* The laſt!——Ingrate!
Aſſiſt me, Heaven! my feet begin to fail;
Cold damps bedew my face; methinks I feel
The freezing hand of death upon my heart.
[*leans againſt a tree.*

*Mega.* My boaſted fortitude decays apace;
The longer I remain, the leſs I find
The power to part——Rouze, rouze, my ſoul!——
I go——
O! Ariſtea, live in peace.

*Arif.* What ſay'ſt thou?
Wilt thou then leave me?

*Mega.* Fate, my Ariſtea,
Demands this ſeparation.

*Arif.* And thou go'ſt——

*Mega.* Yes, never to return. [*going.*

*Arif.* Hear me——Ah no!——
Say, whither go'ſt thou?

*Mega.*

*Mega.* Far from thee, my love,
To breathe in other climes—
[*going, he ſtops at the entrance.*
*Ariſ.* O help!——I faint——
[*falls in a ſwoon upon a rock.*
*Mega.* Unhappy Megacles! what do I ſee?
Her ſpirits ſink with grief; my only joy,
[*returning.*
My Ariſtea, droop not thus: behold
Thy Megacles is here——I will not go——
Thou ſhalt be yet——What have I ſaid? Alas!
She hears me not: and have ye, cruel ſtars,
More miſery for me? No; there reſts but this,
This only to ſuſtain! Where ſhall I find
A friend to counſel? What muſt I reſolve?
To leave her thus were cruel tyranny!
But what avails my ſtay? Shall I eſpouſe her,
Deceive the king, betray my friend? O! never:
Honour and friendſhip both forbid the thought:
Yet may I not at leaſt defer this parting?
Alas! my reſolution then muſt meet
A ſecond ſeparation. Cruelty
Is mercy now—Farewell, my life! Farewell,
My dear loſt hope! On thee may Heaven beſtow
The peace denied to me——[*kiſſes her hand.*]—
Almighty powers!
Preſerve your beauteous work, and add to her's
The days that I may loſe!—What Lycidas!
Where art thou, Lycidas? [*looking out.*

SCENE

## SCENE X.

*Enter* LYCIDAS.

*Lyc.* Has Ariſtea
Been told of all?

*Mega.* She has—Make haſte, O prince!
Aſſiſt thy ſpouſe. [*going.*

*Lyc.* Ye powers! What do I ſee?
What can this mean! [*to* Megacles.

*Mega.* Some unforeſeen diſorder
Has overcome her ſenſes. [*going.*

*Lyc.* Doſt thou leave me?

*Mega.* I go——but O! remember Ariſtea!
[*to* Lycidas.
What will ſhe ſay on her returning ſenſe!
Methinks I know it all!—[*aſide.*] Hear, Lycidas!

O! ſhould ſhe ſeek, or aſk thee where
Thy hapleſs friend is fled;
Return this anſwer to the fair:
My hapleſs friend is dead.

Yet, ah! let not ſuch grief torment
The tender mourner's breaſt:
Reply but this: that hence he went,
With anguiſh ſore oppreſt.

What deep abyſs of woe is mine,
From her I love to part!
And thus for ever to reſign
The treaſure of my heart! [*Exit.*

## SCENE XI.

LYCIDAS, ARISTEA.

*Lyc.* What labyrinth is this in which I am loſt!
See Ariſtea ſenſeleſs! Megacles
Departs afflicted——

*Ariſ.* O ye powers! [*coming to herſelf.*

*Lyc.* But look!
Her gentle ſoul reſumes its wonted functions:
My love, my princeſs! once again uncloſe
Thoſe beauteous eyes.

*Ariſ.* Ah! faithleſs, faithleſs huſband!
[*not ſeeing him.*

*Lyc.* Call me not thus; but here receive my hand,
A pledge of conſtancy. [*takes her hand.*

*Ariſ.* At leaſt—O Heavens! [*ſees* Lyc.
Where, where is Megacles?

*Lyc.* He's gone!

*Ariſ.* Ingrate!
Is he then gone! Had he the heart to leave me
In ſuch a cruel ſtate?

*Lyc.* Thy huſband's here.

*Ariſ.* Is then humanity, faith, love, compaſſion,
[*riſing in a rage.*
Baniſh'd from every breaſt! If ſwift-wing'd juſtice
Conſume not ſuch offenders, why, ye powers!
Why are there bolts in Heaven?

*Lyc.*

*Lyc.* I am all amazement!
Say, who has wrong'd thee? Doſt thou ſeek revenge?
Speak, ſpeak, my love! Behold thy huſband preſent,
Behold thy Lycidas!

*Ariſ.* O Gods! art thou,
Art thou that Lycidas? Fly hence, be gone!
Avoid my ſight! It is through thee, perfidious,
I ſuffer all this wretchedneſs!

*Lyc.* What crime
Have I, unknown, committed!—I am diſtracted!

*Ariſ.* Barbarian! 'tis by thee I'm ſlain;
By thee I from myſelf am torn:
Through thee this anguiſh I ſuſtain,
Through thee forſaken and forlorn!

Ne'er hope from me thy peace to find;
That treacherous boſom I deſpiſe:
Thy ſoul is hateful to my mind;
Thy looks are poiſon to my eyes! [*Exit.*

## SCENE XII.

LYCIDAS, *enter to him* ARGENE.

*Lyc.* [*to himſelf*] And am I this barbarian, this perfidious!
Ye powers!—I'll follow her, and know the cauſe
Of this myſterious chiding.

*Arg.*

*Arg.* Traitor, ſtay!

*Lyc.* Ha! do I dream or wake! [*ſees* Argene.

*Arg.* Thou doſt not dream;
O no! thou ſeeſt forſaken Argene;
Ungrateful man! behold theſe features, once
Thy ſole delight, if midſt my paſt misfortunes
A trace remains of what they once have been.

*Lyc.* Whence could ſhe come? In what a luckleſs hour
Am I ſurpris'd? If ſtill I loiter here
I loſe my Ariſtea. [*aſide.*]——[*to her.*] Beauteous maid!
I underſtand not what thy words import;
Some other time thou may'ſt at better leiſure
Explain thy meaning. [*going.*

*Arg.* Hear me, cruel man! [*holding him.*

*Lyc.* Unhappy me! [*aſide.*

*Arg.* Doſt thou not underſtand me?
But well I underſtand thy perfidy,
Thy new affection! All thy frauds I know;
And Cliſthenes from me ſhall know them all,
To thy confuſion. [*going.*

*Lyc.* O forbear! Yet hear me; [*holding her.*
Be not offended, Argene: forgive
This ſeeming coldneſs: I remember now
My former love, and if thou wilt conceal me,
Perhaps——who knows th' event?

*Arg.* And can I ſuffer

A baſer

A baſer inſult? Say'ſt thou then, perhaps——
Who knows th' event?- Yes, yes, 'tis I am guilty:
The motives thou haſt urg'd to plead thy pardon,
Are doubtleſs mighty proofs of thy affection.

*Lyc.* Yet hear what I would ſay.
[*offers to take her hand.*

*Arg.* Leave me, ingrate!
I'll hear no more!

*Lyc.* O! Gods! I'm all diſtraction!

*Arg.* No; the flatterer Hope in vain
Eſſays his ſoothing power:
Revenge alone I ſeek to gain,
And love expect no more.

Let peace be baniſh'd from thy breaſt,
Where treaſon holds her ſeat;
I'll call myſelf no more diſtreſs'd,
But all my pains forget. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIII.

LYCIDAS *alone.*

Was ever fate ſo cruelly perplex'd?
If Argene betrays me, I am loſt.
I muſt purſue her yet, and calm her rage;
But who, meanwhile, ſhall pacify the princeſs?
My friend alone——but whither is he gone?
I'll ſeek him; Megacles at leaſt will give me
Advice and comfort. [*going.*

## SCENE XIV.

*Enter* AMYNTAS.

*Amyn.* Megacles is dead.

*Lyc.* Say'ſt thou, Amyntas!

*Amyn.* 'Tis, alas! too true.

*Lyc.* Ha! wherefore!—Say, what impious hand has dar'd
Cut ſhort a life ſo precious? Let me find him,
He ſhall be made a monument of vengeance
To all mankind.

*Amyn.* Forbear thy ſearch, and know
'Twas Lycidas that kill'd him.

*Lyc.* Me?—Thou rav'ſt!

*Amyn.* O would to Heaven I did! wandering but now
In ſearch of thee, amid theſe trees I heard
A ſudden groan, and haſtening tow'rds the ſound,
Beheld a man who turn'd his ſword unſheath'd
Againſt his breaſt, and ſtood prepar'd to fall
Upon the fatal point: I ran to ſave him,
Held him from death, and ſnatch'd the weapon from him:
But when I ſaw the face of Megacles,
Think how we both remain'd; recovering ſoon,
What madneſs urges thee to ſeek thy death?
I would have ſaid, but ere I could begin,

" Amyntas,

" Amyntas, I have liv'd enough—" (he cried,
And ſigh'd full deeply from his inmoſt heart)
" I cannot, will not longer bear the light,
" Depriv'd of Ariſtea; ten long years
" I've liv'd for her! 'Tis Lycidas, alas!
" Unknowing kills me: yet he wrongs me not;
" This life was once his gift, and he reſumes it."

*Lyc.* Alas! my friend——Go on——

*Amyn.* This ſaid he vaniſh'd
Swift as a Parthian ſhaft. Thou ſee'ſt yon' rock,
Whoſe lowering front o'erſhades Alpheus' ſtream:
Like lightning thither ſpeeding, from the ſummit
He leap'd, and headlong plung'd amid the flood.
In vain I cried for help, the waves receiv'd him,
And opening, ſwift in circling eddies whirl'd,
Then ſudden clos'd again; the echoing banks
Return'd the ſound, and he was ſeen no more.

*Lyc.* What dreadful image riſes to my ſight!

*Amyn.* O let us ſeek at leaſt thoſe dear remains
That once contain'd ſuch treaſure of a ſoul:
'Tis the laſt office that afflicted friendſhip
Can pay his memory! [*Exit.*

## SCENE XV.

LYCIDAS *alone.*

Alas! Where am I!
What has befallen! Muſt then offended Heaven
Shower all its wrath on my devoted head?

O Megacles! Where art thou, Megacles!
What is this world without thee? Cruel Gods!
[*raving.*
Reſtore to me my friend! 'Twas you who ſnatch'd him
From my embrace, from you I now demand him;
If you refuſe to give him to my vows,
Where'er he is, by force I'll wreſt him from you;
I fear not all your bolts——I have a ſoul
Can urge my ſteps to tread the path below,
Which Hercules and Theſeus trod before.

## SCENE XVI.

*Enter* ALCANDER.

*Alc.* What, Lycidas!

*Lyc.* Even from the loweſt depth——
[*not hearing* Alcander.

*Alc.* Hear, Lycidas!

*Lyc.* Ha! what art thou whoſe raſhneſs
Breaks in upon my frenzy?

*Alc.* From the king
I come a meſſenger.

*Lyc.* What would the king?

*Alc.* He wills that thou be baniſh'd far from hence,
A ſhameful exile: ſhould the ſetting ſun
Leave thee in Elis, thou'rt condemn'd to die.

*Lyc.* And ſends he thus to me?

*Alc.*

*Alc.* Learn hence to aſſume
A borrow'd name, to break the bonds of faith,
And dally with the majeſty of kings.

*Lyc.* Dar'ſt thou, raſh man!——

*Alc.* No more—thus far, O prince!
My duty bids me, which I have fulfill'd;
The reſt remains with thee. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVII.

LYCIDAS *alone.*

Preſumptuous man! [*draws.*
This ſword ſhall through thy breaſt—What have I ſaid?
Whom would my rage chaſtiſe? 'Tis I am guilty:
I am the offender——Let me rather plunge
My weapon here——Die, wretched Lycidas!
Ha! wherefore doſt thou tremble, coward hand,
What is't withholds thee?—This indeed is miſery:
I hate my life, and yet my death affrights me.
My heart is torn in pieces! Rage, revenge,
Repentance, friendſhip, tenderneſs, compaſſion,
Love, ſhame, all, all diſtract me: never breaſt
Was rent before with ſuch contending paſſions!
What can this mean? I tremble 'midſt my threats!
I burn and freeze; I weep even while I rave;
I wiſh for death, yet know not how to die.

Methinks

Methinks the ſhades of night ariſe,
And blot the luſtre of the ſkies!
Around what horrid forms appear!
I feel a thouſand furies here!

Meægras' ſanguine torch inſpires
My boſom with terrific fires!
Alecto all her venom drains,
And ſheds the poiſon through my veins.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

## ACT III. SCENE I.

*A double path formed by the ruins of an ancient Hippodrome, in a great part overgrown with ivy, brambles, and other wild plants.*

MEGACLES, *held by* AMYNTAS, *on one ſide, and on the other,* ARISTEA, *held by* ARGENE, *unſeen of each other.*

*Mega.* Leave me, thou ſeek'ſt in vain to oppoſe my purpoſe.

*Amyn.* O! think my friend! think yet again: believe me
Thou may'ſt not find once more the fiſher's hand
Whoſe aid but now preſerv'd thee from the ſtream.
Reflect that Heaven is tir'd of ſuccouring them
Who tempt too far its goodneſs.

*Mega.* Impious ſuccour!
Inhuman pity! to refuſe him death
Who lives a dying life! O Heaven!—Amyntas,
Leave me.

*Amyn.* O never!

*Ariſ.* Leave me, Argene.

*Arg.* No, hope it not.

*Mega.* Depriv'd of Ariſtea,
I cannot, ought not longer to ſurvive.

*Ariſ.*

*Arif.* Yes, I will die where Megacles was loſt!

*Amyn.* Yet ſtay.

*Arg.* Yet hear me.

*Mega.* Wherefore ſhould I ſtay?

*Arif.* What muſt I hear?

*Mega.* There is no comfort now
Remains for me.

*Arif.* I have no hope on earth.

*Mega.* Yet to prolong my life thou ſtriv'ſt in vain.

*Arif.* To keep me here from means of death, in vain
Thou would'ſt attempt.

*Amyn.* Yet ſtay.

*Arg.* Yet hear.

*Arif.* O Heaven!

*Mega.* O Gods!

[*meeting each other in the middle of the ſtage.*

*Arif.* And art thou Megacles!

*Mega.* Ah! princeſs!

*Arif.* Ungrateful! doſt thou hate me, fly me thus,
That when I ſeek for death to unite me to thee,
Thou tread'ſt again the paths of life.

*Mega.* Behold,
My deareſt Ariſtea, how I am curs'd!

All,

All, all the ways that lead to wiſh'd-for death,
Are barr'd againſt me.

*Ariſ.* Say, what pitying hand—

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ALCANDER.

*Alc.* O! ſacrilegious madneſs! Impious fury!

*Ariſ.* What new diſaſters are there yet in ſtore?
Alcander, ſpeak.

*Alc.* This inſtant has thy father
Receiv'd new life.

*Ariſ.* What doſt thou mean?

*Alc.* What mourning,
What ruin might have cover'd all the land,
Had Heaven preſerv'd him not,

*Ariſ.* Say, how?

*Alc.* Thou know'ſt
By ancient cuſtom that the ſolemn pomp
Of ſacrifice concludes this feſtive day.
While Cliſthenes, encompaſs'd by his guards,
Drew near the hallow'd temple to complete
The ſacred rites, whate'er the cauſe we knew not,
Or whence he came, but Lycidas impetuous
Oppos'd our way: ſuch dreadful looks till then
I ne'er beheld: his right hand graſp'd a ſword:
His head was bare, and all his garments torn;
His locks diſhevell'd; from his fiery eyes

Darted malignant beams; fierce indignation
Fluſh'd on his cheek ſtill moiſt with recent tears.
Amid the aſtoniſh'd guards he forc'd his way,
And ruſhing tow'rds the king—Here end thy life,
Furious he cried, and rais'd his impious ſteel.

*Ariſ.* O Gods!

*Alc.* The king, with countenance unchang'd,
Stood ſtill to wait th' event, fix'd on the youth
A look ſevere, and thus majeſtic ſpoke:
Raſh man, what mean'ſt thou?—Mark how Heaven protects
The lives of kings!——Theſe words at once ſtopt ſhort
The infenſate youth; a ſudden chillneſs ſeiz'd him;
His lifted arm refus'd the fatal blow;
With awe he own'd offended majeſty,
Grew pale and trembled, dropt his threatening ſword,
And from his eyes that glar'd ſo late with rage,
The copious tears guſh'd forth.

*Ariſ.* I breathe again.

*Arg.* O fatal raſhneſs!

*Amyn.* O unthinking youth!

*Ariſ.* What of my father now?

*Alc.* He has before him
The criminal in chains.

*Amyn.* Ah! let us try
What means may ſave him yet. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE III.

MEGACLES, ARISTEA, ARGENE, ALCANDER.

*Mega.* Tell me, what ſays
Unhappy Lycidas?

*Alc.* To all they aſk
He nought replies; though doom'd to death, he ſeems
To know it not, or heeds not what befalls him.
He weeps, he calls on Megacles, for him
Enquires of all, on that dear name his lips
Still dwell, as if they knew no other ſound.

*Mega.* I can no longer hold: for pity's ſake
Lead, lead me to my friend.

*Ariſ.* O unadvis'd!
Where would thy raſhneſs tempt thee! Haſt thou not
Deceiv'd my father? Know'ſt thou not that thou
Art Megacles? To appear before the king,
Would ruin thee, and cannot ſave thy friend.

*Mega.* Yet let me die at leaſt with Lycidas.
[*going.*

*Ariſ.* Hear me. Believ'ſt thou not 'tis better far
That I ſhould fly to appeaſe my angry father?

*Mega.* I durſt not hope ſo much.

*Ariſ.* Yes, for thy ſake
At leaſt I'll try.

*Mega.* O generous Ariſtea!
Grant Heaven that virtuous ſoul may long reſide
In thy dear form: I ſaid, when firſt I ſaw thee,
Thou wert not mortal—go, my love!

*Ariſ.* Enough;
This needs not, one perſuaſive look from thee
Binds me to all that Megacles can aſk.

In thee I bear ſo dear a part,
By love ſo firm am thine;
That each affection of thy heart,
By ſympathy is mine.

When thou art griev'd, I grieve no leſs,
My joys by thine are known;
And every good thou would'ſt poſſeſs,
Becomes in wiſh my own. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

MEGACLES, ARGENE.

*Mega.* Aſſiſt, ye mighty Powers! the pitying goodneſs
Of Ariſtea!——Will her father then
Forego his indignation! Juſtice ſure
Too ſtrongly claims the offender's puniſhment:
And yet paternal love may conquer all.
But ſhould it fail——O Heaven! might I at leaſt
Be witneſs to their converſe——Argene
At diſtance I will follow.

*Arg.*

*Arg.* No, forbear:
Why ſhould thy care for him diſtreſs thee thus?
Thou ſee'ſt the Gods themſelves are wearied grown,
Then leave him to his fate.

*Mega.* Ha! leave my friend!
O no, ſuch baſeneſs never ſhall be mine!

When Heaven aſſum'd a pleaſing face,
I follow'd him in ſmiling ſkies:
Then let me ſtill his footſteps trace,
Though round us gathering ſtorms ariſe.

As in the furnace gold refin'd,
Caſts every droſs impure away:
So in adverſity the mind
Of conſtant friends will faith diſplay. [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

ARGENE *alone.*

Spite of myſelf I feel compaſſion for him:
Fain would I ſhow my rage; I know full well
I have ample cauſe, but midſt my anger ſtill
My threatning lips belie my trembling heart.
And wilt thou Argene confeſs this weakneſs!
It ſhall not be——ungrateful! perjur'd man!
I here deteſt my pity, never more
Will I behold that treacherous face! 'tis now
The object of my ſcorn; I would exult

To

To ſee him puniſh'd: ſhould he fall before me
Wounded to death, I would not ſhed a tear.

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* AMYNTAS.

*Amyn.* Where ſhall Amyntas fly? Ill-fated day!
O Lycidas!

*Arg.* Is then the traitor dead!

*Amyn.* No, but he ſoon muſt die.

*Arg.* Believe it not,
Amyntas: many with the wicked join,
And hence they never fail of help at need.

*Amyn.* Thou art deceiv'd: there is no more to hope.
The laws pronounce his death; the people murmur;
The prieſts exclaim: offended majeſty
Demands his blood: the criminal is nam'd
A victim to complete the ſacrifice
He had profan'd: the public have already
Confirm'd his ſentence: he muſt be ſlain
On Jove's high altar; there the offended king
Will to the prieſt preſent the ſacred axe.

*Arg.* Can nought reverſe his doom?

*Amyn.* What can reverſe it?
The youth already is enrob'd with white:

I ſaw

I ſaw him crown'd with flowers—O Heaven!—I
ſaw him
Move to the temple: now, perhaps even now,
He is arriv'd, and now, O Argene,
The conſecrated ſteel may drink his blood!

*Arg.* Alas! unhappy prince! [*weeps.*

*Amyn.* Why ſhouldſt thou weep
When tears are vain?

*Arg.* And comes not Ariſtea?

*Amyn.* She comes, but nothing has obtain'd; the king
Or will not hear, or cannot grant her ſuit.

*Arg.* And what of Megacles?

*Amyn.* Hapleſs he's fallen
Upon the guards that ſought his track: but now
I heard him midſt his chains demand to die
To ſave his friend; and were himſelf not guilty
He had obtain'd his wiſh; but never here
One criminal can for another bleed.

*Arg.* At leaſt he has procur'd another victim
That may and will redeem him: Generous goodneſs!
O glorious fortitude! Can I hear this
Without a bluſh! Are then the bonds of friendſhip
More ſtrong than thoſe of love?——My ſoul is warm'd
To emulate ſuch virtue! let us gain

Our

Our ſhare of honour; while the world endures,
Let my misfortunes be admir'd and pitied,
And none with tearleſs eyes repeat my name.

My boſom glows with unknown fire,
I feel the God my ſoul inſpire;
No mortal bounds his power reſtrain.
Methinks I ſee, unmov'd with fear,
Cords, axes, wheels, and ſwords appear,
And dreary ſhades of victims ſlain! [*Exit.*

## SCENE VII.

AMYNTAS *alone.*

Fly! ſave thyſelf, Amyntas! on theſe ſhores
All, all is death and horror—yet, O Heaven!
Where ſhall I go, depriv'd of Lycidas?
I who have nurs'd him from his infant years,
Bred him from birth obſcure to regal honours,
Shall I forſake him thus, depart without him?
No, to the temple I'll again return;
There meet the fury of the offended king:
Let Lycidas involve me in his fate,
There let me die with grief, but die beſide him.

Like the poor wretch by tempeſts thrown
To ſuffer wreck on ſeas unknown,
When 'midſt the waves he pants for breath,
And ſtruggles with ſurrounding death:

The-

The wreck that bore him, bears no more,
The ſtars are loſt he view'd before;
Even Hope her ſeat no longer keeps,
But leaves him helpleſs to the deeps. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

*An outſide view of the temple of* JUPITER OLYMPUS, *the deſcent from which is by a magnificent flight of ſteps. An open place before the temple, with an altar burning in the middle: around is a wood of ſacred olive-trees, from which the crowns are made for the victors in the games.*

CLISTHENES *deſcends from the temple preceded by a crowd of people and his guards:* LYCIDAS *in white veſtments crowned with flowers:* ALCANDER, *Chorus of prieſts, ſome of whom carry the inſtruments of ſacrifice.*

CHORUS.

Eternal Power! in Heaven rever'd,
Great Sire of Gods attend!
Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
Great God of kings ſuſpend!

PART CHORUS.

See mighty Jove! thy wrath to aſſuage,
His blood thy altar ſtain,
Who in a king, with impious rage
Thy image durſt profane.

CHORUS.

Eternal Power! in Heaven rever'd,
Great Sire of Gods attend!
Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
Great God of kings ſuſpend.

PART CHORUS.

The wretch ſhall paſs the dreary tide
From Lethe's ſilent ſhore:
With him ſhall all our fears ſubſide;
His guilt be heard no more.

CHORUS.

Eternal Power! in Heaven rever'd,
Great Sire of Gods attend!
Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
Great God of kings ſuſpend!

*Clif.* Ill-fated youth! behold thy hapleſs days
Draw to their wretched period: yet may Jove
Puniſh me, if I feel not ſuch compaſſion,
I dare not look on thee: and would to Heaven
I could conceal thy crime: but this, my ſon,
This muſt not be. I am guardian of the throne,
To me the dignity unſtain'd deſcends;
And I muſt render it unſtain'd to him
Who ſhall ſucceed me, or muſt vindicate
The rights infring'd. It is the painful duty
Of thoſe who reign, ſometimes to curb their pity.

But if thou wiſheſt aught, except thy life,
Speak freely thy deſire; and here I ſwear
To ſee it duly anſwer'd: yes, my ſon,
Aſk what thou wilt, and cloſe thine eyes in peace.

*Lyc.* My father, for theſe words are from a father
And not a king and judge, I hope not, aſk not,
Deſire not pardon; nor would even receive it.
Fate with afflictions has ſo heap'd my days,
That life not death I fear. My only wiſh,
Since he ſtill lives, is to behold my friend
Before I die: this final grace I beg,
Let me embrace him once and die contented.

*Clif.* Thy ſuit is granted. Guards! let Megacles
Be brought before our ſight.

*Alc.* You weep, my lord:
What new compaſſion has ſo far depreſs'd
Your troubled ſoul?

*Clif.* Alcander, I confeſs it.
I wonder at myſelf; his looks, his voice
Have rais'd a ſtrange convulſion in my frame,
That vibrates through my nerves. Midſt all my thoughts
I ſeek, but ſeek in vain to find the cauſe;
Ye righteous Gods what can this tumult mean?

Whence can theſe tender paſſions riſe?
This warmth that through my boſom flies,
This new, but pleaſing pain?
Sure pity never could impart
Such ſtrong emotions to the heart,
That thrill through every vein.

## SCENE IX.

*Enter* MEGACLES, *guarded.*

*Lyc.* Come, great example of unſullied friendſhip,
Come, moſt belov'd, and deareſt Megacles!

*Mega.* Alas! my prince, and do I find thee thus?

*Lyc.* To ſee thee living makes me bleſs'd in death.

*Mega.* And what is life to me if I'm denied
To pay it for thy ſafety? Yet thou ſhalt not
Be long before me; no, my Lycidas,
Together ſhall our friendly manes croſs
The diſmal ſtream.

*Lyc.* O! thou, while fate permitted,
The dear companion of my joys and ſorrows!
Yes, we muſt part: ſince then we've reach'd at length
This fatal hour, give me thy faithful hand
And hear me; 'tis my prayer, my laſt command.
Still live, I charge thee live; and O! my friend,

Cloſe with thy pitying hand my dying eyes:
Sometimes remember me: return to Crete:
There to my father—moſt unhappy father!
All unprepar'd for ſuch a cruel ſtroke,
There ſoften, while thou tell'ſt the bitter tale:
Comfort, aſſiſt his age oppreſs'd with grief,
I recommend him to thee——if he weep,
Dry up his tears, and if he aſk a ſon;
Thou, in thyſelf, to him a ſon reſtore.

*Mega.* Ah; hold——thy words diſtract me!

*Clif.* No, Alcander,
I can reſiſt no longer: mark thoſe looks,
Obſerve that ſtrict embrace, each tender ſigh,
Thoſe laſt adieus confus'd with frequent tears!
Unhappy ſtate of frail mortality!

*Alc.* My lord, the hour for ſacrifice is paſt.

*Clif.* 'Tis true——Ye ſacred miniſters, receive
The victim to your charge, and you, ye guards,
Divide him from his hapleſs friend.

[*the prieſts and guards part them.*

*Mega.* Barbarians!
O! from my breaſt, you rend my bleeding heart.

*Lyc.* Alas! my friend!

*Mega.* My deareſt prince!

*Both.* Farewell!

[*looking on each other at a diſtance.*

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Eternal Power! in Heaven rever'd,
Great Sire of Gods attend!
Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
Great God of kings ſuſpend!

[*While the Chorus is ſung,* Lycidas *kneels at the altar by the ſide of the prieſt. The king receives the conſecrated axe from one of the miniſters of the temple; and as he is preparing to deliver it to the prieſt, the foregoing chorus is ſung accompanied with ſolemn muſic.*]

*Cliſ.* O Sire of Gods and men! Almighty Jove!
At whoſe dread nod, earth, ſea and Heaven are mov'd!
Thou, with whoſe power the univerſe is fill'd,
Thou, from whoſe hand depends the wondrous chain
Of cauſes and events! accept this victim
Now ſacrific'd to thee; and may it wreſt
The threatning thunder from thy awful hand!

[*As* Cliſthenes *is about to deliver the axe to the prieſt, he is interrupted by the ſudden appearance of* Argene.]

SCENE

## SCENE X.

*Enter* ARGENE.

*Arg.* Forbear, O king! Forbear ye holy prieſts!

*Clif.* O raſhneſs unadvis'd! Thou know'ſt not, nymph,
What rites thou haſt diſturb'd.

*Arg.* I rather come
To make them more acceptable to Jove;
I bring a guiltleſs voluntary victim,
One who has fortitude enough, and ſeeks
To die for this offender.

*Clif.* Where's the victim?

*Arg.* In me behold it.

*Mega.* Wondrous proof of love! [*aſide.*

*Lyc.* O my confuſion! [*aſide.*

*Clif.* Know our law permits not
The weaker ſex to ſuffer for the ſtrong.

*Arg.* Yet ſure the wife may ſuffer for her huſband:
For thus I've heard Alceſte in Theſſalia
Preſerv'd Admetus' life; and well I know
That her example is become our law.

*Clif.* What art thou then the wife of Lycidas?

*Arg.* He gave his hand, and plighted me his faith.

*Clif.*

*Clif.* Lycoris, hearing thee, I've more than caught
Thy frenzy: can a kingdom's heir eſpouſe
A low-born ſhepherdeſs?

*Arg.* I'm not Lycoris,
Nor am I lowly born——my name is Argene.
The ancient glory of my noble blood
Is known in Crete; and Lycidas can tell
If e'er he vow'd me love.

*Clif.* Speak, Lycidas.

*Lyc.* 'Tis ſurely now compaſſion to be falſe.
[*aſide.*
Believe her not. [*to* Cliſthenes.

*Arg.* Ha! canſt thou then deny it?
Turn thee, ingrate! if me thou wilt not own,
Yet ſee thy gifts; behold this golden chain,
Which I from thee receiv'd that hapleſs day,
When thou didſt ſwear to take me for thy bride.

*Lyc.* O 'tis too true! [*aſide.*

*Arg.* Behold him, mighty king.

*Clif.* Guards! take her from our preſence.

*Arg.* Hear, my friends!
Ye ſacred miniſters! Eternal Gods!
If any Gods are preſent at theſe rites,
This ſacrifice unjuſt, before ye all
I here proteſt, I ſwear that I am wife
To Lycidas, and I will die for him;

Nor

Nor ſhall a power—O princeſs! haſte, aſſiſt me,
Thy father hears me not. [*ſees* Ariſtea.

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* ARISTEA.

*Ariſ.* Believe me, ſir,
She well deſerves your pity. [*to* Clif.

*Clif.* Would you then
Reduce me to diſtraction like yourſelves?
Speak, but be brief. [*to* Argene.

*Arg.* Then let theſe jewels ſpeak
While I am ſilent; do the nymphs of Elis
Wear ornaments like theſe?
[*gives the chain to* Cliſthenes.

*Clif.* What do I ſee! [*diſturbed.*
Tell me, Alcander, know'ſt thou not this chain?

*Alc.* Know it! 'Tis what adorn'd thy helpleſs ſon,
When to the waves an infant I expos'd him.

*Clif.* Lycidas!—Heavens! through all my frame I tremble!
Riſe, Lycidas——look here——ſay, is it true?
Had ſhe this gift from thee?——

*Lyc.* And yet for that
She muſt not die——our promiſe was a ſecret—
It never had effect——the marriage rites
Were never ſolemniz'd.

*Clif.*

*Clif.* I aſk but this,
Was this thy gift?

*Lyc.* It was.

*Clif.* Say, from what hand
Didſt thou receive it?

*Lyc.* From Amyntas' hand.

*Clif.* And who is that Amyntas?

*Lyc.* One to whom
My father gave the charge to form my youth.

*Clif.* Where is he now?

*Lyc.* With me he came from Crete,
With me arriv'd at Elis.

*Clif.* Inſtant ſeek
For that Amyntas.

*Arg.* He himſelf is here.

## SCENE XII.

*Enter* AMYNTAS.

*Amyn.* O Lycidas! [*offers to embrace him.*

*Clif.* Forbear awhile, and anſwer,
But truly anſwer, whence thou hadſt this chain.

*Amyn.* My lord, 'twas given me by a hand unknown;
Since which have twenty-five long years elaps'd.

*Clif.* But where was this?

*Amyn.* Where turbulent Aſopus

Near

Near Corinth pours his current to the ſea.

*Alc.* Sure in that viſage I confeſs the trace
Of features ſeen before: I am not deceiv'd,
'Tis he himſelf! [*aſide.*]—O mighty king! I am guilty, [*kneels.*
And own my former crime: yet grant me pardon,
And I'll diſcloſe the whole.

*Clif.* Riſe then, and ſpeak.

*Alc.* I did not, as thou gav'ſt to me in charge,
Expoſe the infant; vanquiſh'd by my pity,
I gave him to this ſtranger, who by chance
Appear'd before me, hoping he might bear
The hapleſs child to ſome far diſtant ſhore.

*Clif.* Where is that child, Amyntas? What befell him?

*Amyn.* I——Heaven! What myſtery muſt I now reveal!

*Clif.* Ha! art thou pale? Speak, wretch, what didſt thou with him?
Add not by ſilence to thy former guilt.

*Amyn.* Thou haſt him preſent—Lycidas is he.

*Clif.* How! Is not Lycidas the prince of Crete?

*Amyn.* That prince an infant died. When I to Crete
Again return'd, I gave the afflicted king
This child; and to ſupply the ſon he loſt,
By my advice he bred him for his heir.

*Clif.*

*Clif.* Gods! 'tis Philinthus, 'tis my ſon, my ſon!
[*embracing him.*

*Ariſ.* Ye powers!

*Lyc.* Am I your ſon!

*Clif.* Yes; thou wert born
A twin with Ariſtea: Delphos bade me
Expoſe thee, when an infant, to the ſea,
Threatning in thee the crime of parricide.

*Lyc.* Now I perceive what caus'd my ſecret horror,
When late this hand was rais'd againſt your life.

*Clif.* Now well I underſtand the ſtrange emotion
I felt before thy preſence.

*Amyn.* Happy father!

*Alc.* 'Tis yours this day to render many bleſt.

*Clif.* Nor do I purpoſe leſs. My ſon ſhall be
The ſpouſe of Argene, and Megacles
Of Ariſtea——but my ſon Philinthus
Is criminal, and ſtands condemn'd to die.

*Mega.* No more he's guilty ſince he's found your ſon.

*Clif.* Has then my blood the mighty privilege
Of doing wrong unpuniſh'd? All come here
To ſhew their fortitude; ſhall I alone
Give proofs of weakneſs? Never ſhall the world
Thus witneſs to my ſhame. Ye miniſters!
The ſacred fire rekindle on the altar;

Go,

Go, die my ſon!—I ſhall not long ſurvive thee.

*Amyn.* O cruel juſtice!

*Alc.* O inhuman virtue!

*Mega.* My lord, forbear, thou canſt not now condemn him;
In Sicyon, not Olympia, art thou king:
The day is paſt in which thou didſt preſide,
The criminal muſt wait the public ſentence.

*Clif.* Then hear the public voice; let that decide,
I neither aſk his life, nor ſeek to ſave him.

CHORUS of PRIESTS and PEOPLE.

The ſon, though guilty, ſhall ſurvive
Nor by his puniſhment deprive
Of peace a guiltleſs ſire:
Let not ſuch horror ſtain the day,
Or unpropitious grief allay
The joys our rites require.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

HYPSIPYLE.

# HYPSIPYLE.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

THOAS, King of LEMNOS, Father of HYPSIPYLE.

HYPSIPYLE, in love with, and betrothed to JASON.

EURYNOME, a widow Princeſs of the royal blood, mother of LEARCHUS.

JASON, Prince of THESSALY, in love with, and betrothed to HYPSIPYLE; General of the ARGONAUTS in the expedition to COLCHOS.

RHODOPE, Confidante of HYPSIPYLE, in love with, but deceived by LEARCHUS.

LEARCHUS, Son of EURYNOME, in love with, but rejected by HYPSIPYLE.

The SCENE lies in LEMNOS.

# HYPSIPYLE.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*The entrance of the temple of* BACCHUS, *adorned with feſtoons of vine leaves, hanging from the arches, and wreathed round the columns. Various images of Satyrs and Silenus.*

HYPSIPYLE *and* RHODOPE, *crowned with vine leaves, each with a thyrſis in her hand. A troop of Bacchanals at a diſtance.*

*Hyp.* Haſte, Rhodope, in pity to my grief,
Fly, ſave my father: let him not approach
Theſe fatal ſhores, tell him what danger waits
In this deteſted palace; open all
The dire conſpiracy of female malice.

*Rho.* And yet this inſtant has thy tongue pronounc'd
The dreadful oath to take thy father's life!
Myſelf beheld thee at the horrid altar
With countenance unmov'd—

*Hyp.* All, all was feign'd
To blind Eurynome; thou ſaw'ſt how fierce
She breathed her impious rage from breaſt to breaſt;

Say, who can ſtop a torrent's headlong courſe?
When every one beſides confeſs'd her fury,
Had I remain'd ſuſpected, I had loſt
The means to aſſiſt my father. Filial duty
Taught me to wear the maſk of fell revenge:
But while my lips breath'd out the murderous vow,
My heart invok'd the Gods for his protection;
And even my ſeeming boldneſs ſprung from fear.

*Rho.* Yet think not me—

*Hyp.* If thou delay'ſt, we are ruin'd—
O fly, my friend! loſe not a moment's time;
Already are his veſſels near the port—
O Heaven! whom do I ſee? Eurynome!

*Rho.* What threatening vengeance ſparkles in her eyes!

*Hyp.* Whiſper ſome counſel to me, gracious powers!

## SCENE II.

*Enter* EURYNOME, *with a train of women, dreſſed like Bacchanals.*

*Eury.* Princeſs! and you my brave companions, hear.
The faithleſs Lemnians from the Thracian ſhores,
Once more regain their long-forſaken home:
The glorious taſk is ours to avenge the wrongs
Of our neglected ſex; the ungrateful traitors
At length return; but diſtant from our ſoil,

Thrice have they ſeen ſucceſſive harveſts riſe.
They come, but with them bring the ill-omen'd fruits
Of their deteſted loves, and ſtolen embraces:
Even in our ſight they bring our hated rivals,
With features painted like the mountain ſavage,
And nurs'd with milk of beaſts; and theſe, O ſhame!
Shall boaſt the ſpoils of your affronted beauty.
Revenge! revenge! our ſolemn oath is given:
All muſt conſpire to aid the great deſign.
The night will to defenceleſs ſleep conſign
The offenders ſpent with toil; the rites of Bacchus
With feſtive ſhouts will drown each dying groan.
O then let fathers, brothers, huſbands, ſons,
Fall undiſtinguiſh'd in one common ruin;
A great example of vindictive juſtice,
To warn mankind to keep their plighted faith.

*Hyp.* Yes, ſhe who harbours pity merits death.

*Rho.* How well ſhe feigns a fury! [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* Rhodope,
Depart with ſpeed, (thou know'ſt what I would ſay)
And when the Lemnian troops ſhall gain the land,
Repair to give us tidings.

*Eury.* Fruitleſs caution:
Myſelf beheld the ſquadrons leave the ſhips.

*Hyp.* What ſays Eurynome?

*Eury.* Even now I ſaw them.

*Hyp.* O let me ſtop my father! [*aſide, going.*

*Eury.* Whither go'ſt thou?

*Hyp.* To meet the king, and with a forc'd embrace
Conceal my hatred, and prevent ſuſpicion.

*Eury.* 'Tis now too late—behold where Thoas comes.

*Hyp.* O Heavens! I faint! [*aſide.*

## SCENE III.

*Enter* THOAS *attended.*

*Tho.* [*to* Hyp.] Thou deareſt of my cares!
Come to thy father's breaſt; remote from thee
I heavier felt the weight of lengthen'd years;
But now, my daughter, thou art preſent with me,
My age ſeems loſt, and youth again revives.
[*embraces her.*

*Hyp.* O my torn heart! [*aſide.*

*Tho.* What mean, Hypſipyle,
Thoſe looks of ſadneſs? Is it coldly thus
A daughter meets her father?

*Hyp.* Ah! thou know'ſt not— [*aſide.*
My lord!—

*Eury.* Take heed, Hypſipyle.
[*aſide to* Hypſipyle.

*Hyp.* O torture! [*aſide.*

*Eury.*

*Eury.* Her weakneſs will betray me. [*aſide.*

*Tho.* Is my preſence
Become ſo hateful to thee?

*Hyp.* Ah! my father!
Thou little know'ſt my thoughts!

[Eurynome *threatens* Hypſipyle, *to prevent her ſpeaking.*

*Tho.* Speak.

*Hyp.* Heavens! I cannot.

*Tho.* Speak, daughter, if thy heart averſe diſclaim
The deſtin'd nuptials with Theſſalia's prince,
Whom every moment we expect—

*Hyp.* O ſir!
From the firſt inſtant I beheld, I lov'd him.

*Tho.* Perchance, accuſtom'd in my ſtead to reign,
Thou fear'ſt that my return muſt end thy power;
Thou art deceiv'd; I am no longer here
A ſovereign or a king. Abſolve, condemn;
Rewards and puniſhments are in thy hand;
I aſk no further, dear Hypſipyle,
Than here to live with thee, and die beſide thee.

[*embraces her.*

*Hyp.* No more, my father!—

[*weeps and kiſſes his hand.*

*Tho.* Whence theſe guſhing tears?

*Eury.* The ſoft effuſions of too ſudden joy.

*Tho.*

*Tho.* Exceſs of joy, through quick ſurpriſe,
Oft bids the tears o'erflow;
But ſure ſome paſſion fills thine eyes
With drops that ſpring from woe.

Few can deceive, with ſhews of art,
A father's watchful care;
Whoſe ſight explores a daughter's heart,
And reads her ſorrows there. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

HYPSIPYLE, EURYNOME, RHODOPE, *Bacchanals.*

*Eury.* Hypſipyle.

*Hyp.* What would'ſt thou?

*Eury.* If thy nature
Refuſe to lift thy weapon againſt Thoas,
Reſign the taſk to us.

*Hyp.* Why doſt thou ſeek
To rob me of the deed my arm aſpires to?
Think better of my faith.

*Eury.* 'Tis boldly promis'd:
Thou bid'ſt me truſt thee, yet but now I ſaw
When in a father's ſight thy looks grew pale.

*Hyp.* Even from the hardy warrior's cheek,
Oft-times the colour flies;
When firſt the trumpet's clangors ſpeak,
And bid the battle riſe.

Yet

Yet ſcorns his ſoul, with brave diſdain,
Ignoble doubts to hear;
Though on his face awhile remain
The tranſient marks of fear. [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

EURYNOME, RHODOPE, *Bacchanals.*

*Eury.* See, Rhodope, already day declines:
We muſt delay no longer: ſome few moments
Shall give th' expected ſignal—but methinks
Thou look'ſt diſturb'd.

*Rho.* The reverend age of Thoas
Excites my pity; and in him I ſtill
Reſpect the name and perſon of a king.

*Eury.* He is our greateſt foe: in cruel exile
By him Learchus died; and Rhodope
Might better ſure remember both our wrongs:
In him I loſt a ſon, and thou a lover.

*Rho.* His crimes but well deſerv'd his puniſhment:
For me he feign'd a paſſion, while he ſought
With impious love to force Hypſipyle.

*Eury.* I ſee full well thou ſeek'ſt with vain excuſes
To hide thy weakneſs.

*Rho.* I'm a woman ſtill.

*Eury.* Then as a woman burſt thy ſlaviſh bonds,
And vindicate thy ſex on perjur'd man.

'Tis

'Tis falſely ſaid that woman-kind,
As by the laws of Heaven deſign'd,
To gentle paſſions ſtill confin'd,
With love alone the heart control.
'Tis ours alike, when vengeance warms,
To mix in battle's ſtern alarms,
With beauty's or with valour's arms,
To allure or terrify the ſoul.

[*Exit with Bacchanals.*

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* LEARCHUS.

*Rho.* [*to herſelf.*] Why ſeem the Gods regardleſs of mankind!
Is there no pitying power that will protect
This wretched land? O moſt deteſted night!
O horror!—Ha! what do I ſee! Learchus!

*Lear.* Silence, dear Rhodope, betray me not.

*Lear.* I ſpread the rumour to deceive the king.

*Rho.* What brings thee unadvis'd to periſh here?
Fly, fly, Learchus!

*Lear.* Let me yet a moment
Breathe out my faithful vows.

*Rho.* Learchus, no.
Too late thou would'ſt betray my eaſy faith:
'Tis jealouſy that brings thee back to Lemnos.

Haſt

Haſt thou not heard Hypſipyle muſt wed
The prince of Theſſaly? Thou haſt, and now
Thy treacherous mind revolves ſome black deſign.

*Lear.* Believe me not ſo guilty—

*Rho.* Hence! no more:
Fly, ſave thyſelf: to-morrow's fatal dawn
Shall here behold the race of man extinct.
The vengeful daughters of our Iſle have ſworn
To wreak their rage on the devoted ſex:
This is the hour of ſlaughter.

*Lear.* Canſt thou hope
That I'm ſo weak? Invent ſome better fiction
To terrify Learchus.

*Rho.* Yet believe me;
O fly! thou art loſt, if thou contemn'ſt my pity.

*Lear.* Forgive me if I muſt ſuſpect thy pity.
Thou think'ſt I have betray'd thee, canſt thou then
So warmly prize the ſafety of a foe?
No, Rhodope, that virtue ill we credit
Which ſoars above the weakneſs of mankind.

*Rho.* Each thinks another's paſſions ſtill
Are by his own expreſt;
And thus confounds the good or ill,
In every other breaſt.

If thou canſt ſcarcely now conceive
That pity dwells in mine,
With equal pain muſt I believe
That treaſon dwells in thine. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

LEARCHUS *alone.*

No——I deſpiſe a woman's fooliſh threats:
Befall what will we muſt diſturb the nuptials
Of the too happy Jaſon. Near the ſhore
A deſperate band, inur'd to live on ſpoil,
And long the terror of the ſailor-train,
Attend my nod. I know each avenue
And quarter of the palace; here awhile
I'll lurk conceal'd, and act as time demands.
Let thoſe who but begin to plunge in guilt,
Shrink at the danger; I've already paſs'd
So far from crime to crime, 'twere fruitleſs now
To ſtop my mid career with late remorſe.

Who ne'er has left the flying ſhore,
When firſt he ſails the ocean o'er,
Thinks every ſtar with fate combin'd,
And dreads a ſtorm in every wind.
With trembling heart each ſound he hears:
But cuſtom ſoon diſpels his fears;
Then to the billows' roar he ſleeps,
Or careleſs ſings amid the deeps. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE VIII.

*Part of the garden belonging to the palace, with fountains on each ſide, and a view of a grove ſacred to* DIANA. *Time, night.*

HYPSIPYLE, THOAS, LEARCHUS *concealed in the grove.*

*Hyp.* At length thou art ſafe, my father: here unſeen
In Dian's ſacred grove, till my return
Amid theſe ſhades remain.

*Tho.* Are theſe, my daughter,
Thy Jaſon's nuptials! this our tender meeting!

*Hyp.* Ah! ſir! conceal yourſelf: the time admits not
Of vain complaints.

*Tho.* O Heaven! muſt thou return,
Expos'd to all the rage of female malice?

[Learchus *advances and liſtens unſeen.*

*Hyp.* By this alone I can ſecure our ſafety:
My preſence muſt confirm what I've invented,
That all may deem thee dead.

*Tho.* How canſt thou hope
To blind Eurynome?

*Hyp.* A Lemnian ſlain
Wrapp'd in thy regal veſt, ſhall cheat the eye;
O'er him I'll mourn, and ſeem to weep my father.

*Tho.*

*Tho.* I doubt thy pious fraud——

*Hyp.* O no! in Heaven
There ſtill are Gods that watch the life of kings,
And aid the juſt deſigns of innocence.

*Tho.* There is no friendly power for us—

*Hyp.* If all
Conſpire againſt us, and vindictive rage
Should for thy blood preſerv'd demand my own,
Flow deep the vital ſtream; at leaſt theſe eyes
Shall ne'er behold thy death: the world ſhall know
That midſt my ſex's univerſal guilt,
I ſtill purſued the unerring path of virtue,
Nor e'er forgot a daughter's ſacred ties. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

THOAS *alone.*

Heroic maid! Fate, I forgive thee all;
Thou mad'ſt me father to Hypſipyle,
And every ſuffering's light: take, take my throne,
Deprive me next of life, but cheriſh ſtill
Such ſentiments to inſpire my daughter's breaſt,
And, pitying Gods! I'll thank you for your bounty.

My ſoul, indulging in the thought,
With tender bliſs runs o'er;
Her words to me that peace have brought,
My breaſt had loſt before.

Deſpis'd

Deſpis'd alike be every ill
Which mortals can ſuſtain,
One moment's joy which now I feel,
Is worth an age of pain.
[*retires into the grove.*

## SCENE X.

LEARCHUS, THOAS *apart.*

*Lear.* What have I heard? Did Rhodope indeed
Declare the truth?—How if Hypſipyle
Returning here ſhould take me for her father?
O fair device!—then might I ſeize the princeſs,
Deceive and force her——ha! it ſhall be ſo:
But hold—no matter—doubtleſs love inſpires
The happy fraud:—be bold my heart——what,
Thoas! [*approaches to the grove.*
Where can he lie conceal'd?

*Tho.* A voice unknown
Repeats my name! What means it?

*Lear.* Wretched daughter!
Whom now thy father undeſigning kills.

*Tho.* What haſt thou ſaid? for whom doſt thou lament?
Who art thou? ſpeak.

*Lear.* Unleſs I find the king,
Hypſipyle is loſt.

*Tho.*

*Tho.* Ha! loſt! Say, wherefore?
Behold me here. [*coming out.*

*Lear.* Thanks to the mighty Gods!
But fly, my lord! fly from this impious place:
In Lemnos 'tis ſuſpected you're conceal'd.
Soon will the vengeful female bands appear;
And ſhould your preſence verify ſuſpicion,
Your daughter for her piety muſt ſuffer.

*Tho.* At leaſt I'll ſtay and die in her defence.

*Lear.* Ah! if thou truly lov'ſt her, rather fly;
Thy flight alone can ſave her.

*Tho.* Tell me, friend,
To whom I ſtand indebted for this kindneſs.

*Lear.* Thou know'ſt me not—I am—but haſte, depart;
For look, already through the parting boughs,
I ſee the mingled gleam of rebel arms.

*Tho.* When will ye ceaſe your malice, cruel ſtars! [*Exit.*

## SCENE XI.

LEARCHUS *alone.*

Heaven proſpers to my wiſh the wiles of love:
Ye timorous lovers, learn from me to mix
Boldneſs and ſtratagem—to ſeize—to raviſh—
All means are glorious. Be the conqueſt ours,
And whether wit or fortune give the prize,
Alike the victor merits his reward.

Each

Each lover that would win the fair,
May with the warrior well compare,
For whether fame or beauty charms,
Alike the ſchool of love and arms.
The lover uſes fraud and lies;
Inſidious arts the warrior tries;
And both, when victory they gain,
Forget their former toil and pain.

[*retires into the grove.*

## SCENE XII.

*A hall illuminated, with an image of* REVENGE *in the middle.*

HYPSIPYLE, RHODOPE.

*Hyp.* Yet hear me——ſhun me not.

*Rho.* How ſhall I ſtay?
My ſoul is chill'd with terror——Can I view
A cruel daughter who has dar'd to ſteep
Her impious weapon in a father's blood?
Leave me——

*Hyp.* Suppoſe thou art deceiv'd?

*Rho.* Deceiv'd?
Shall I not then believe theſe eyes that ſaw
The murder'd monarch in his regal palace?
I ſaw, and tremble yet with fear and horror.

*Hyp.*

*Hyp.* O no, my friend, in him who ſeem'd like Thoas,
Thou ſaw'ſt—but hark—ſome one approaches—go,
Attend me at Diana's ſacred grove:
There ſhalt thou know the whole, and further may'ſt
Aſſiſt me with thy friendſhip.

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* EURYNOME.

*Eury.* One amongſt us
Betrays her faith.

*Hyp.* And whence is this alarm?

*Eury.* One of our tyrants yet ſurvives, even now
He was ſurpris'd within the narrow paſs
That leads into the palace.

*Hyp.* Heavens! I tremble——
My father ſure—— [*aſide.*

*Rho.* Perhaps it is Learchus. [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* Could'ſt thou diſcern his perſon?

*Rho.* Has his name
Yet reach'd thy ears?

*Eury.* By favour of the ſhade
He ſcap'd our knowledge; but in armour ſheath'd
Againſt our force he made a bold defence.

*Rho.* Is he then taken?

*Hyp.*

*Hyp.* Is he vanquiſh'd?

*Eury.* No:
But ſoon the female ſquadrons muſt o'erpower
His ſingle arm.

*Rho.* O ill-adviſ'd Learchus! [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* Ah! wretched father! [*aſide.*

## SCENE XIV.

*Enter* JASON *with his ſword drawn, purſuing ſome Amazons.*

*Jaſ.* [*within.*] 'Tis in vain ye hope
To elude my juſt revenge, while thus——
[*ſees* Hypſipyle *as he is about to attack her.*

*Eury. Rho.* O Heaven!

*Jaſ.* My love!

*Hyp.* Ah prince!

*Jaſ.* Is this the Lemnian palace?
Or theſe the inhoſpitable Lybian ſhores?

*Hyp.* Ah! my lov'd prince! what God has ſav'd your life?

*Jaſ.* I came to celebrate the rites of Hymen,
But found myſelf beſet with hoſtile arms.

*Hyp.* Thou ſhould'ſt ere this have ſent to give us notice
Of thy arrival.

*Jaſ.* No; I hop'd to increaſe

Thy rapture by this unexpected meeting.
For this I left my followers in the veſſel,
And tow'rds the palace took my purpos'd way:
When ſudden by an armed troop aſſail'd,
I drew my ſword; and ſoon the aſſailants fled.
Enrag'd I follow'd; but when now I thought
To o'ertake and puniſh the perfidious band,
I met with thee.

*Hyp.* Go, Rhodope, command
That all forbear the prince of Theſſaly;
His life be ſacred; for our vow extends
To Lemnians only. [*Exit* Rhodope.

## SCENE XV.

HYPSIPYLE, EURYNOME, JASON.

*Jaſ.* Vow! what means Hypſipyle?

*Eury.* The ungrateful ſex have fallen a ſacrifice
To woman's juſt revenge: there lives not now
A ſingle man in Lemnos.

*Jaſ.* Heavens! what force
Suffic'd to perpetrate this horrid purpoſe?

*Hyp.* Night and fatigue betray'd the unthinking victims;
Some, while they yielded to a falſe embrace,
Expos'd their boſoms to the vengeful ſword:
Some quaff'd fallacious death in poiſon'd bowls:
Some breath'd their laſt in ſleep: a thouſand forms
Conceal'd

Conceal'd the treaſon with the maſk of friendſhip.

*Jaſ.* My blood is chill'd with horror—but the king——

*Hyp.* He too expir'd amidſt the general ſlaughter:
Should I ſpeak truth I muſt expoſe my father.
[*aſide.*

*Jaſ.* Are theſe the regions where the Furies dwell?
Come, dear Hypſipyle, retire with me,
[*takes her hand,*
To breathe in other climes an air leſs cruel,
Where happier omens may attend our loves;
Nor ſhall the death of this ill-fated king
Remain unpuniſh'd: witneſs all ye powers!
I ſwear full vengeance for the horrid deed.

*Eury.* The offender's name ſhall calm thy utmoſt rage.

*Jaſ.* O never! never!

*Eury.* She's ſo dear to Jaſon,
Thou wilt at once forgive and pity her.

*Jaſ.* No charm ſhall ſtay my wrath, whoe'er is guilty—
So may kind love preſerve the pure affections
Of her to whom are all my thoughts devoted.

*Eury.* By her was Thoas ſlain.

*Jaſ.* By whom?

*Eury.* Hypſipyle,
Thy wife.

*Hyp.* O Heaven! [*aſide.*

*Jaſ.* Speak, ſpeak, my life, defend
Thy glory from the dreadful imputation:
Can this be true?

*Hyp.* O cruel fate! [*aſide.*]—Even ſo.
[*to him, after having looked at* Eurynome.
Say'ſt thou! [*lets go her hand.*

*Hyp.* I muſt endure it. [*aſide.*

*Jaſ.* Do I dream!
Or is it frenzy all! What voice was that
Struck through my heart! Was that Hypſipyle!
Did Jaſon hear!

*Eury.* Now, prince, complete thy vow;
Now, if thou wilt, revenge the ſlaughter'd Thoas.

*Jaſ.* Are there ſuch ſavage minds!

*Hyp.* My lord, my Jaſon,
Condemn not yet thy wife.

*Jaſ.* Hence from my ſight!
My wife! am I thy love! who now ſhall preſs
That hand ſtill reeking with a father's murder?
I ſeem already to partake thy guilt
While here with thee I breathe one common air,
And my heart ſhudders as I now behold thee.
[*going, he ſtops at the entrance of the ſcene, and continues looking attentively at* Hypſipyle.

*Hyp.* How much, my father, to inſure thy ſafety
Thy daughter ſuffers! [*aſide.*

*Jaſ.*

*Jaſ.* Who ſhall henceforth ſay
The looks reflect the image of the mind?
Let them contemplate yonder form, and learn
How vice can lurk beneath the maſk of goodneſs

*Hyp.* Why doſt thou thus in ſilence gaze upon me?

*Jaſ.* I ſeek through all that lovely face
Some marks of cruelty to trace;
No cruelty I find:
So deep from every ſearching eye,
Can dire revenge and fury lie
Conceal'd within the mind. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVI.

HYPSIPYLE, EURYNOME.

*Hyp.* Hear'ſt thou?——O Heaven!

*Eury.* Sigh not, Hypſipyle:
Thou loſeſt thus the glory of the deed;
And theſe weak ſigns of womaniſh repentance,
Diſgrace the former courage thou haſt ſhown.
[*Exit.*

## SCENE XVII.

HYPSIPYLE *alone.*

O let me haſte, and from my lover's mind
Remove an error fatal to my fame.
No——firſt a father's danger claims my care,
Let him be ſafe and then——but ah! meantime
Jaſon forſakes me!——Yet Hypſipyle
Shall firſt preſerve the rights of filial duty,
And thoſe preſerv'd, the reſt be left to Heaven!

I feel thy power, unpitying love!
Thy hopes and fears too ſtrongly move
A heart with every pain diſtreſs'd:
Yet ah! forbear——this fatal hour
Muſt love and duty rend no more
With ſtruggling pangs a daughter's breaſt;
[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

## ACT II. SCENE I.

*Part of the garden belonging to the palace, with fountains on each ſide, and in the middle a grove ſacred to* DIANA. *Time, night.*

EURYNOME, LEARCHUS *concealed in the grove.*

*Eury.* In every part methinks theſe eyes behold
Some dreadful objects that augment my fury.
Ye lonely horrors of the ſilent night,
Raiſe no remorſe to terrify my ſoul!
Say rather that my ſon's unhappy ſhade
No longer roves without a wiſh'd revenge:
Say that no more he ſighs in vain to croſs
The dire Lethean flood; and that his peace
Is cheaply purchas'd by his mother's crime.

*Lear.* It is Hypſipyle—be bold Learchus.
[*comes out of the grove.*

*Eury.* Some one approaches! Heavens! what can it be?

*Lear.* Thou deareſt!— [*takes her hand.*

*Eury.* Say, what art thou? Whence that voice?

*Lear.* Ha! I'm deceiv'd! [*retires.*

*Eury.* Ye powers! what chilling fear
Runs through my veins! Methought I heard the voice

Of

Of my Learchus—where art thou, my ſon!
Ah! do not hide thee from a mother's ſight:
O! ſpeak and tell me why thou art return'd:
What would'ſt thou? Wherefore doſt thou hover round me?

Unhappy ſhade of him I mourn,
Dear ſon, no longer mine;
If vengeance prompt thee to return,
Know 'tis already thine.

What victim can appeaſe the dead,
What peace canſt thou obtain,
If all the blood this hand has ſhed,
Was ſhed for thee in vain?

[*walks about in great agitation.*

## SCENE II.

*Enter* HYPSIPYLE *in haſte.*

*Hyp.* Sure Rhodope has reach'd this place before me;
But hark! ſhe's here: fly ſwift, my friend, to Jaſon,
[*meeting* Eurynome, *ſhe takes her for* Rhodope.
Tell him the king yet lives, and that this hour
Shall ſee us both together at the port:
Yet ſtay awhile, for Jaſon with his friends
Perhaps may meet us, and ſecure our flight.

[*goes towards the grove.*

*Eury.*

*Eury.* [*to herſelf.*] What ſecret treaſon here has chance diſcover'd!
Now well I know, my ſon, why round me hovers
Thy plaintive ghoſt; and have I then in vain
Been plung'd in guilt? And muſt the tyrant live?
O no——nor ſhall it e'er be ſaid I've loſt,
The fruit of all my crimes, a great revenge.
[*goes out in a rage.*

## SCENE III.

HYPSIPYLE, LEARCHUS *apart.*

*Hyp.* This is the ſacred grove where lies conceal'd
My deareſt father. At my firſt arrival,
The ſhade, my terror, and impatient duty,
Perplex'd my trembling ſteps; but now full well
I know the place——My lord! my father! haſte.

*Lear.* Sure 'tis the voice of her I love——be bold—— [*coming out of the grove.*
O Heaven! my heart beats quick as I approach her.

*Hyp.* Come near—where art thou?—Yet I hear thy ſteps,
But cannot find thee——'midſt this dreary gloom
Perhaps——O no, thou art here. [*takes his hand.*

*Lear.* Aſſiſt me, Love! [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* Thou trembleſt, O my father! fear not; Jaſon

Will

Will make our flight ſecure: for even but now
He reach'd the port of Lemnos.

*Lear.* Fatal chance!
What do I hear? [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* Already from afar
I ſee the blaze of torches.

*Lear.* Then I'm loſt. [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* And now, methinks, I hear my Jaſon's voice.

*Lear.* Let me again retire. [*returns to the grove.*

*Hyp.* But whither go'ſt thou?
Why doſt thou fly, my lord?——Alas! how far
Misfortunes can unnerve the firmeſt ſoul!

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* EURYNOME *with Bacchanals and Amazons with arms and lighted torches.*

*Eury.* Companions, compaſs round the wood, and ſtop
Each outlet of the garden.

*Hyp.* Wretched Thoas,
Thy fear was ſure prophetic. [*aſide.*

*Eury.* Thou art diſcover'd;
Say where thy father lurks. [*to* Hypſipyle.

*Hyp.* Aſſiſt me, Gods! [*aſide.*
Doſt thou require the dead?

*Eury.* 'Tis now too late
For this diſſimulation: thou wert heard
To call his name, and hold a converſe with him.

*Hyp.* O! 'tis too true——his mournful image ever
Appears before my ſight; where'er I go
Purſues my trembling ſteps; calls me ungrateful;
Reproaches me with ſavage cruelty,
That durſt cut ſhort a father's reverend days.

*Eury.* Her words congeal me, though I know ſhe feigns. [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* I tremble while I ſtrive to hide my fear. [*aſide.*

*Eury.* No more——deceit is vain——

*Hyp.* O Gods! look there!
Behold Eurynome, ſee where he comes!
Obſerve his fiery eyes that ſwell with rage,
While tears of anger trickle down his cheek;
His ſnow-white locks ſtill dropping crimſon blood,
Hang o'er his hoary face. Doſt thou not hear
His threatening voice, and mark his dreadful mien?
Unhappy ſhade!——Enough have I endur'd
Of puniſhment——O Heavens!—In pity, hide,
Hide from my ſight the torch of hell—take hence
The furies' iron whips——

*Eury.* Ill-fated princeſs!
My ſoul is mov'd!

*Hyp.* She ſoftens at my words. [*aſide.*

*Eury.*

*Eury.* Yon' trees afford a ſhelter in their gloom
For melancholy phantoms: haſte, my friends,
Hurl round the flames, and ſwift conſume to aſhes
That unpropitious wood.

*Hyp.* Ah, no! forbear
Thoſe trunks devoted to the Sylvan Goddeſs.

*Eury.* Hearken not to her——

*Hyp.* Impious! ſhall not then
The Gods themſelves be ſacred from thy fury?
And who ſhall execute the dire command?

*Eury.* Unthinking maid! thou haſt betray'd thyſelf.
Behold the grove where Thoas lurks conceal'd;
Go, friends, and drag him thence to puniſhment.
[*the Amazons enter the grove.*

*Hyp.* Hear me! O! hear a moſt unhappy daughter!
What ſhall I do? O all ye powers of Heaven!
Eurynome have pity!

*Eury.* 'Tis in vain;
Thy father ſhew'd no pity to my ſon.

*Hyp.* If thou'rt ſo thirſty for revenge, ſtrike here;
O pierce this breaſt, and let me bleed for him!
Behold me ſuppliant, grovelling at your feet—
[*kneels.*

*Eury.* Her tears diſarm my rage. [*aſide.*

*Hyp.* O yet relent,

Or

Or change the deſtin'd victim of thy fury.
By all that is rever'd in earth or Heaven,
Even by the aſhes of thy dear Learchus!

*Eury.* That name has rouz'd anew my ſleeping rage;
The tyrant dies, even by this hand he dies:
[*draws her ſword.*
Ne'er will I reſt till I behold my ſword
Drench'd in his blood.

[*as ſhe turns, thinking to find* Thoas, *ſhe meets* Learchus, *conducted by the Amazons from the grove; ſhe ſtands in amazement, and lets fall her ſword.*

*Lear.* My mother!

*Eury.* Heavens! my ſon!

*Hyp.* What can this mean? Amazement ſeizes me! [*riſes.*

## SCENE V.

*Enter* RHODOPE.

*Rho.* What do I ſee? Learchus here and bound!
What power can ſave him!—Yes—I muſt diſſemble. [*aſide.*

*Eury.* Art thou my ſon! Am I Eurynome!

*Lear.* As certain as deſire to avenge thy ſon
Has made thee cruel to him.

*Eury.* Wretched mother,

That

That blindly has deſtroy'd thee! Doſt thou live
Only to make me guilty of thy death?
O my lov'd ſon! how dearly muſt I buy
The bitter pleaſure of this fond embrace!

*Rho.* Companions, bind the victim to yon' trunk,
And let our thirſty arrows drink his life.

[*the Amazons bind* Learchus *to a tree.*

*Eury.* Ah! hold——Inhuman——

*Rho.* Firſt by force remove
Eurynome, nor let maternal ſorrows
Diſturb our purpoſe.

*Hyp.* O unhappy mother!

*Eury.* Have pity, Rhodope——

*Rho.* Wouldſt thou o'erturn
The laws thyſelf haſt made?

*Eury.* Hypſipyle,
Compaſſionate my tears!

*Hyp.* Alas! what power
Remains in me!

*Rho.* If but a moment more
Thou linger'ſt here, we ſpeed the ſtroke of death.

*Eury.* What mortal pangs can equal what I ſuffer!

The laſt farewell how ſhall I ſpeak?
A mother's pain what words can tell?
I feel my heart with anguiſh break——
Dear offspring of my love farewell!

This

This fond embrace from her receive,
Whoſe fatal error ſeals thy death:
O! that I thus my woes could leave,
And in theſe arms reſign my breath! [*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

HYPSIPYLE, RHODOPE, LEARCHUS, *Bacchanals, and Amazons.*

*Lear.* Unpitying princeſs! in Learchus' fate
Behold the dreadful trophies of thy charms!
Exceſs of love impell'd me to this ruin.

*Hyp.* Learchus, no: thou art thyſelf alone
The cauſe of thy misfortunes.

*Lear.* At my birth
This day was fix'd in fate's eternal volume.

*Hyp.* Unhappy moment when I pleas'd thee firſt!

That hapleſs inſtant when thy eyes
Beheld and thought me fair,
Some baleful ſtar was ſeen to riſe,
And ſhed a diſmal glare.
Leſs cruel would thy hatred prove,
Than ſuch a dire deſtructive love. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

RHODOPE, LEARCHUS, *Bacchanals, Amazons.*

*Rho.* My friends, unwelcome here to Nemeſis
Would prove the victim: be the ſacrifice
Public and ſolemn: haſte and raiſe an altar
Amid the full aſſembly of the people.
Convene together all the conquering band:
Meantime myſelf will in this place remain
To guard the priſoner.

[*the Bacchanals and Amazons go out.*

*Lear.* Never did I think
Such tyranny could harbour in thy breaſt.

*Rho.* Ungrateful man! learn better how to judge
The ſoul of Rhodope; I feign'd reſentment
To avert from thee th' effects of female rage.

*Lear.* Should this be true, my heart is thine—

*Rho.* O! no—
Think not I mean to bargain for thy love.

*Lear.* Perhaps thou doubt'ſt me ſtill—By all the Gods—

*Rho.* Learchus, hold——I would not have thee purchaſe
My gift with perjury: from Rhodope
Receive at once thy liberty and life. [*unbinds him.*

*Lear.* Yet what return can gratitude afford thee?

*Rho.* I'm now rewarded, but thou know'ſt it not.
Thou

Thou canſt not judge the generous mind,
What ſweets from mercy flow;
My wrongs might here their vengeance find,
But pardon I beſtow.

With ſecret joy the offended views
The offender's bluſhes riſe;
Whoſe fearful conſcience guilt ſubdues,
While ſhame his ſpeech denies. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

LEARCHUS *alone.*

Why does my feeble virtue take the alarm,
Yet cannot rouze from this lethargic ſleep?
What means this late remorſe? Down, rebel conſcience!
I will not have thee ſtruggling in my boſom:
Rule, or obey; ſubdue, or be ſubdued.

Let choice direct, or fate conſtrain
The affections of my breaſt,
Yet wherefore ſhould they thus in vain
With doubts my peace moleſt?

If they're compell'd, why do we name
Our paſſions good or ill?
And wherefore are they ſtill the ſame
If they can change at will? [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

*An open country covered over with tents, a proſpect of the ſea: the ſun riſing.*

JASON *alone.*

Amidſt a thouſand doubts oppreſt,
My heart ſtill flutters in my breaſt,
But no reſolve my thoughts approve.
While beauties in her face I find,
My ſoul deteſts her ruthleſs mind;
I'm torn by hatred and by love.

And can a lovely face ſo far deceive?
Hypſipyle, more fierce than beaſts of prey!
Barbarity like thine exceeds whate'er
Hyrcania's foreſts yield, within whoſe ſhades
No tigreſs lurks ſo cruel to deſtroy
A father's life——and do I then excuſe her?
Frame new pretences to prolong my ſtay?
O no!——my lofty heart diſdains to avow
Its weakneſs paſt. I once believ'd her worthy
Of Jaſon's flame, and fain would ſtill defend
The choice of love——Behold the morning riſe!
And yet my ſpirits keep the accuſtom'd watch,
Though ſpent with fruitleſs care—but now, methinks,
I feel the tumult of my breaſt ſubſide;

My

My eyes grow heavy, and my mind ſuſpends
The painful ſtruggle of conflicting paſſions. [*ſleeps.*

## SCENE X.

*Enter* LEARCHUS.

*Lear.* Enough of ill, my ſoul. At length 'tis time,
After ſo many dangers paſt, to change
This baneful courſe. I cannot bear for ever
To tremble near the fatal precipice;
To reverence others, and deteſt myſelf.——
What do I ſee! my rival ſlumbering here?
O! happy thou, born under friendly ſtars!
The inhuman fair, who ſcorns my love, reſerves
Her charms for thee; but I in vain muſt mourn
Abandon'd to deſpair; while 'midſt th' embraces
Of mutual fondneſs thou ſhalt ſcorn my ſufferings,
And find new pleaſure from Learchus' pains.
O cruel image that diſtracts my heart!
No——let not him ſurvive by whom I periſh;
[*draws a dagger.*
Here let him die——but ha! what would I do!
[*ſtops.*
Are theſe the generous thoughts I form'd but now?
Is this my late remorſe?

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* HYPSIPYLE.

*Hyp.* [*entering.*] Where ſhall I meet
My hapleſs father?——Ha!——Learchus here!
What means his poniard drawn?

*Lear.* [*to himſelf.*] The world can ne'er
Be conſcious of this virtue: ſhould I now
Forbear to kill him, my revenge is loſt,
And yet no glory gain'd: the time will come,
I may repent this ill-adviſ'd compaſſion:
Then let me ſtrike the blow. [*about to ſtab him.*

*Hyp.* Ah! traitor! hold:
What would'ſt thou do? [*holding his hand.*

*Lear.* Leave me, Hyſipyle.

*Hyp.* Hope not I'll e'er permit——

*Lear.* Conſent with me
To quit this place, and I reſign my weapon.

*Hyp.* Firſt let a thunder-bolt from angry Jove
Daſh me to atoms!

*Lear.* Then his fate is fix'd;
There is no mercy for him.

*Hyp.* Stay, Learchus:
If I but waken him, thou art loſt.

*Lear.* Ah! hold;
I am gone, Hypſipyle.

*Hyp.*

*Hyp.* Firſt let thy hand
Reſign the poniard to me.

*Lear.* There, ingrate!
[*after a pauſe gives up the dagger to her.*
Prince! thou art betray'd! [*wakes* Jaſon, *and flies.*

*Hyp.* O ſtay!——
[Jaſon *riſing, and about to draw his ſword, ſees* Hypſipyle *with the dagger in her hand.*

## SCENE XII.

JASON, HYPSIPYLE.

*Jaſ.* Betray'd! by whom!
Almighty powers! [*ſees* Hypſipyle.

*Hyp.* My lord!

*Jaſ.* Relentleſs woman!
What have I done to thee? What crime of mine
Incites thy vengeance? That I've lov'd, may merit
Severeſt puniſhment, but not from thee.
Thou would'ſt, inhuman, from the face of earth
Sweep all the inhabitants, that none might here
Be witneſs to thy guilt.

*Hyp.* Has then my fate
More ſufferings for me? Prince, thou art deceiv'd;
I came not here to take thy life.

*Jaſ.* That dagger,
Thoſe looks confus'd, the voice I heard but now
Which rouz'd me from my ſleep: do not all theſe
Enough

Enough condemn thee?

*Hyp.* 'Twas another hand
Aſſail'd thy life; I ſav'd it from the danger.

*Jaſ.* Yes; I have wondrous proofs of thy compaſſion:
She who could pierce a father's breaſt, would doubtleſs
Preſerve a huſband.

*Hyp.* O! I ſlew him not.

*Jaſ.* But if thy lips——

*Hyp.* My lips, by fate compell'd,
Belied my deeds.

*Jaſ.* What if I here beheld
The murder'd monarch?

*Hyp.* 'Twas deception all:
Thou didſt not, couldſt not ſee him,

*Jaſ.* Tell me then
Where now is Thoas hid?

*Hyp.* Alas! I know not;
I've ſought him, but in vain——

*Jaſ.* Perfidious woman!
And think'ſt thou Jaſon can be thus deluded?
Is't not enough, but thou muſt mock me too?
Thou haſt confeſs'd thy crime; each tongue confirms it;
Myſelf am witneſs to it; yet thou hop'ſt
To aſſume the name of innocent! even now

I ſtart

I ſtart from ſleep, I find thee by my ſide,
With looks confus'd, a dagger in thy hand,
Prepar'd to pierce my heart; and wilt thou dare
To tell me all was meant for my defence?
Think not that Theſſaly has form'd her ſons
So eaſy of belief.

*Hyp.* Soon ſhalt thou ſee——

*Jaſ.* I've ſeen enough.

*Hyp.* And wilt thou not——

*Jaſ.* O! no;
I'll hear no more.

*Hyp.* And doſt thou then believe——

*Jaſ.* Yes, I believe that I partake thy guilt
In liſtening to thee longer.

*Hyp.* Muſt we part?

*Jaſ.* Leave me.

*Hyp.* Where is thy former love!

*Jaſ.* With ſhame
I call it now to mind.

*Hyp.* And am I then——

*Jaſ.* Thou art poiſon to my eyes!

*Hyp.* Yes, yes, ye furies!
Inhabitants of this deſtructive land,
I find that to be innocent is guilt.
Have I not ſeen enough of ſlaughter ſtain
My native ſoil? Aſſuage your horrid thirſt,

Behold

Behold my blood ſhall flow! [*offers to ſtab herſelf.*

*Jaſ.* What doſt thou mean! [*holds her.*

*Hyp.* Why ſhould'ſt thou, Jaſon, thus reſtrain
my hand,
And make me longer drag the life I loathe?

*Jaſ.* Die, if thou wilt, but ſeek ſome other place
To end thy wretched being.
[*wreſts the dagger from her.*

*Hyp.* Yet at leaſt——

*Jaſ.* Leave me in peace.

*Hyp.* O hear me!

*Jaſ.* Never, never.

*Hyp.* Kill me, in pity kill me!

*Jaſ.* No——I cannot.

*Hyp.* For one laſt look——

*Jaſ.* 'Tis guilt but to behold thee.

*Hyp.* My lord! my huſband!

*Jaſ.* Hence! or I am gone.

*Hyp.* Since 'tis your harſh command, I go;
But for this cruelty you ſhow,
Your heart perhaps will anguiſh know,
With ſighs your breaſt may heave.
And when you learn my hapleſs ſtate,
In vain your tears may mourn my fate;
For ſorrow then ſhall prove too late
My ſufferings to relieve. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XIII.

JASON *alone.*

*Jaſ.* At length ſhe's gone! Thanks to the mighty Gods!
A moment longer thoſe ſeducing tears
Had ſapp'd my beſt reſolves: far diſtant hence
Let me retire to breathe another air,
Where abſence may eraſe this ſhameful paſſion.

## SCENE XIV.

*Enter* THOAS.

Ah prince!——my friend!

*Jaſ.* My lord! am I awake?
Or art thou ſovereign of the Lemnian land?

*Tho.* At leaſt I have been ſo.

*Jaſ.* I'm all amazement!
How art thou riſen again? Myſelf beheld thee
Stretch'd pale and lifeleſs in the regal palace:
Either I then but dream'd, or now I dream.

*Tho.* Thou ſaw'ſt a murder'd wretch array'd like me,
In princely robes, whoſe ſemblance to myſelf
Deluded every eye: this pious fraud
Hypſipyle contriv'd for my defence.

*Jaſ.*

*Jaſ.* O Heaven! my love! and art thou guiltleſs then
Of each imputed crime!—Thoas, farewell,
This inſtant I'll return. [*going.*

*Tho.* Why would'ſt thou leave me?

*Jaſ.* O! let me find the treaſure of my ſoul;
Soon ſhalt thou know how I have injur'd her.

*Tho.* Yet hear: what would'ſt thou do? The female bands,
Fluſh'd with their late ſucceſs, ſcour every part;
And ſhould'ſt thou thus unguarded venture forth,
Thou could'ſt not 'ſcape thyſelf, nor ſave Hypſipyle.

*Jaſ.* To arms, to arms! awake, 'tis Jaſon calls—
Follow me, friends. [*going towards the tents.*

*Tho.* Myſelf will guide your ſteps.

*Jaſ.* O no! thy preſence might diſturb our purpoſe,
Amidſt my fury I ſhould fear for thee.
Haſte, my companions, haſte! each moment's precious——
My wife! my friend! O Heaven, my ſoul is rack'd
Between contending pangs of love and friendſhip.

I leave

I leave thee, prince, nor can I tell
But this may prove the laſt farewell!
This arm muſt her I love reſtore,
Or Jaſon ſhall return no more.

[*while this air is ſinging, the Argonauts come out of the tents.*]

[*Exit* Jaſon, *with Argonauts.*

## SCENE XV.

THOAS *alone.*

No——while my dear Hypſipyle's in danger,
I will not linger here a tame ſpectator:
A father's love ſhall with new vigour brace
My feeble limbs: each timorous beaſt aſſumes
A ſudden fierceneſs to defend its young;
Loudly they threat, lay by their natural fear,
And what was weakneſs late is courage now.

The turtle when ſhe once eſpies
The unpitying churl that robb'd her neſt;
Feels the fierce flame of fury riſe,
Till then a ſtranger to her breaſt:

And though no ſtrength of claws or bill,
To guard her helpleſs young avails;
At leaſt the cruel ſpoiler ſtill
She with unceaſing cries aſſails. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

## ACT III. SCENE I.

*A remote part of the Iſland betwixt the city and the ſea-ſhore, with cypreſs trees and monuments of the ancient kings of* LEMNOS.

LEARCHUS *with two pirates.*

*Lear.* Our hopes, my valiant friends, have prov'd abortive;
Fortune oppoſes oft the beſt deſigns:
Go, and let each be ready to depart.
[*the pirates going.*
But ha! what do I ſee!——behold where Thoas
Comes unattended to this lonely place.
Now for the laſt expedient fate can offer—
Return, my friends. [*pirates return.*

## SCENE II.

*Enter* THOAS.

*Tho.* [*entering.*] I was directed ſtill
To abide in Jaſon's camp; but anxious thoughts
Forbade me there to reſt.

*Lear.* Obſerve my purpoſe:
Away. [*pirates go out.*

*Tho.* [*to himſelf.*] My boſom throbs with hopes and fears:
I find

I find no peace, but every moment dread
Some ſtroke of fate: by this untrodden path,
I'll ſeek the regal palace. [*going.*

*Lear.* Now, Learchus,
Let artifice befriend thee. [*aſide.*]—See, my lord,
The guiltieſt of your ſubjects at your feet:
Permit him thus—— [*to* Thoas, *kneeling.*

*Tho.* Ye powers!——art thou alive!
Art thou Learchus!

*Lear.* I'm indeed Learchus.

*Tho.* What wouldſt thou have from Thoas?—

*Lear.* Death, or pardon.

*Tho.* Hence, traitor, dare no more approach my ſight.

*Lear.* Hear me, and then reject me at your will.

*Tho.* Perfidious! know'ſt thou not what puniſhment
Awaits thee here?

*Lear.* Death I deſerv'd, my lord,
When I preſum'd to attempt with ruffian force
The fair Hypſipyle: but if a fault
Of youth can find no pity from my king,
A fault which love inſpir'd, which keen remorſe
Has ſince ſeverely puniſh'd; here at leaſt,
Here let me periſh in my native land.
Five tedious years, an outcaſt from my country,
Wandering in foreign climes, the ſport of fate,

I've

I've liv'd an object loath'd by earth and Heaven;
And, ah! what wounds me more, my prince abhors me.
I'm weary grown of long protracted woe:
Life is the greatest evil I endure;
And he, who drives this spirit from her dwelling,
Is bounteous while he kills me.

*Tho.* [*aside.*] Such despair
Pleads in his cause, and mitigates his crimes.

*Lear.* Why linger thus my friends?
[*aside, looking out.*

*Tho.* From thy misfortunes,
Learchus, learn in future to respect
The majesty of kings——Be comforted;
And live——I pardon thee. [*going.*

*Lear.* Alas! my lord,
Still am I left uncertain; grant me then
Some surer pledge of mercy.

*Tho.* After pardon,
What can I grant thee more?

*Lear.* Your royal hand.

*Tho.* Receive it, and depart. [*giving his hand.*

*Lear.* O gracious prince,
Whose goodness imitates the pitying Gods:
This moment has effac'd my past misfortunes—
Not yet return'd! [*aside.*]——Still trembling, doubtful still,

Behold me at your feet, and proſtrate thus——

*Tho.* What men ſurround me?

[*pirates enter armed, and ſurround* Thoas.

*Lear.* So—the ſtroke is given. [*riſing.*
Yield me thy ſword.

*Tho.* Whom ſpeak'ſt thou to?

*Lear.* To thee.

*Tho.* To me! Almighty powers! but how——

*Lear.* No more:
Thou art my priſoner.

*Tho.* What unheard-of treaſon!

*Lear.* At length thou art fallen into my ſnare: thy life
Is at my will. Endure thy lot with patience:
'Tis thus the world for ever ſhifts the ſcene,
And adverſe fortune ſtill ſucceeds to good:
'Tis thine in turn to plead for mercy.

*Tho.* Villain!

*Lear.* Hold, Thoas, change this language: my example
Might teach thee prudence: 'twas but now I bent
With humble prayers, a ſuppliant at thy feet.
To ſuit our tempers, as the various turns
Of life demand, is ſure a needful virtue.
The force thou ſee'ſt is all at my command:
I can at will——

*Tho.* What canſt thou further do?

Take

Take from this ebbing life its poor remains,
Already irkſome from the double weight
Of years and ſorrow?

*Lear.* Thus Learchus ſaid,
But while he ſpoke, his tongue belied his thoughts.

*Tho.* Great is the difference 'twixt my heart and thine.

*Lear.* Vain boaſting all! each animal that lives,
Deſires to hold his being: conſtancy,
Which heroes vaunt in fate's extremeſt trials,
Is but an art to cheat the unthinking vulgar:
I read thy ſecret breaſt, and know thou trembleſt.

*Tho.* Yes, I might tremble, if the ſoul of Thoas
Were form'd like thine: a thouſand horrid crimes
Would then for ever haunt my guilty ſight:
Still ſhould I ſeem to hear the bolts of Jove
For ever hiſſing round me; Jove the avenger,
Who puniſhes the guilt of human-kind.

*Lear.* To me the wrath of Heaven is not ſo dreadful.

*Tho.* Vain boaſting all! Thou canſt not harbour peace:
For ſtill congenial with our nature, grows
The love of virtue; if it prove too weak
To guard from crimes, at leaſt it will ſuffice
To be their puniſhment: it is a gift
From Heaven, decreed to be a ſcourge to thoſe
Who dare abuſe it; and the greateſt curſe

The

The wicked find, is that they ſtill retain,
Even in their own deſpite, the ſeeds of honour,
And feel a conſcious ſenſe of ſovereign goodneſs:
I read thy ſecret breaſt, and know thou trembleſt.

*Lear.* My friends, take hence this ſage philoſopher,
Whoſe knowledge can explore the human mind.
Conduct him priſoner to the ſhips; and thou,
Lay by that uſeleſs ſword.

*Tho.* There—take it, traitor!

[*throws away his ſword.*

*Lear.* Now muſt thou bid adieu to kingly pride;
Since Thoas is the vanquiſh'd, I the victor.

*Tho.* Firſt, impious wretch! theſe features view,
Then judge impartial of the two,
Where lies the victory.
Though free, thy looks are pale with fear,
While I theſe chains undaunted wear,
And pity feel for thee.

[*he is led off by the pirates.*

## SCENE III.

*Enter* RHODOPE.

*Lear.* [*to himſelf.*] Yet that majeſtic mien, thoſe ſentiments
That ſpeak the kingly ſoul—but hold, my thoughts:
Let me reflect on nothing but the gain

Of all my heart aſpires to.

*Rho.* [*entering.*] O Learchus!

*Lear.* Say, Rhodope, whence ſprings thy ſudden fear?

*Rho.* Not far remote a ghaſtly troop of ſtrangers
Bear royal Thoas priſoner to the ſea.
O! if within thy breaſt one ſpark remain
Of bravery or virtue, ſeize this moment
To give it proof: now may'ſt thou cancel all
Thy guilty deeds, and make thy name immortal.

*Lear.* Indeed!——Say, how?

*Rho.* Give liberty to Thoas:
Go—riſk thy life to ſave thy king from danger;
Periſh or conquer; with one generous action
Efface the memory of thy former crimes,
Nor let me longer bluſh to own I've lov'd thee.

*Lear.* Thou counſell'ſt well, and ſhalt, for thy reward,
Be undeceiv'd: know then, by my command
Is Thoas now ſecur'd. Hence, if thou wilt,
Relate the news to proud Hypſipyle:
Warn her no longer to deſpiſe a foe,
However weak: ſo little will ſuffice
To injure others, that in humble ſtate,
Even when depreſs'd, a foe may ſtill be fear'd.

Tell her in me ſhe ſoon may find
Th' effects of love ſo ill return'd:
Go, bid her then recall to mind
How once her pride Learchus ſcorn'd:

And if offended at my deeds,
She gives me now a traitor's name;
Declare the offence from her proceeds,
Who kindled this deſtructive flame. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* HYPSIPYLE.

*Rho.* [*to herſelf.*] Can crimes like theſe debaſe the mind of man?
O wretched daughter! moſt unhappy princeſs!
What wilt thou feel when thou ſhalt hear the tidings!

*Hyp.* My friend! our ſufferings all are paſt; and Heaven
At length is tir'd of heaping woes upon us.
My faithful conſort, and his valiant friends,
Have quell'd the fierce inhabitants of Lemnos:
My innocence is clear'd, my father ſafe:
We are victors, diſcord ſtills her horrid voice,
All, all is love, and peace, and happineſs!

*Rho.* And yet is Thoas——

*Hyp.* Thoas now awaits

Jaſon's return to the Theſſalian camp.

*Rho.* O were it ſo!

*Hyp.* What mean'ſt thou! Speak, my friend—

*Rho.* Thoas is now a priſoner.

*Hyp.* Ha! to whom?

*Rho.* A priſoner to Learchus.

*Hyp.* To Learchus!
How know'ſt thou this?

*Rho.* But now I met him bound,
Encircled by the followers of that traitor.

*Hyp.* Who are his followers?

*Rho.* Wretches like himſelf.

*Hyp.* O heavenly powers! to what untried misfortunes
Will you reſerve me yet!——O fatal day!

## SCENE V.

*Enter* JASON *with the Argonauts.*

*Jaſ.* Hypſipyle, my life! what new affliction
Obſcures thoſe lovely eyes?

*Hyp.* My deareſt lord,
Thou com'ſt in happy time; for O! 'tis thou,
And thou alone, canſt eaſe me——Haſte—defend him—
Have pity on me—

*Jaſ.* Speak, my love, what would'ſt thou?

As

As yet I know not what thy ſpeech intends.

*Hyp.* O! Thoas!—O—my father!——curſt
Learchus—
I cannot ſpeak—

*Rho.* The traitor, falſe Learchus,
Bears off in fetters Thoas to the ſea.

*Jaſ.* Perhaps the ſame—

*Hyp.* Yes, 'tis the ſame Learchus,
Who ſought to kill thee while oppreſs'd with ſleep,
But failing in the dire deſign, endeavour'd
With baſe ſuſpicions to diſturb our peace.

*Jaſ.* Infamous villain!

*Hyp.* Generous prince, behold
An enterpriſe that's worthy of thy courage:
Thou may'ſt preſerve my deareſt father's life:
O ſave him, or Hypſipyle is loſt!
The fatal hour that ſees the death of Thoas,
Cuts ſhort my thread of being.

*Jaſ.* Leave me, love,
To puniſh that perfidious—but meanwhile
Dry up thoſe mournful drops; to ſee thee weep
Softens too much the temper of my heart.

O! let not ſorrow dim thoſe eyes
That rule me with unbounded power;
Aſſuage thy fears,
Diſpel thy tears,
If I'm to boaſt of courage more.

Then ceaſe to bid ſoft paſſions riſe
That all my firm reſolves control;
For thus my breaſt,
With grief oppreſt,
Forgets what rage ſhould fire my ſoul.
[*Exit with Argonauts.*

## SCENE VI.

RHODOPE, HYPSIPYLE.

*Rho.* O princeſs! do not yield to black deſpair;
Think not that fortune will for ever frown;
Rely on Jaſon's valour ſtill, and hope.

*Hyp.* How can I hope, (ſince born to woe,
My ſorrows never ceaſe)
That this ſad mind ſhould ever know
A tranſient gleam of peace?

Each hour, my heart, by fate depreſs'd,
A double anguiſh bears;
It ſinks, with preſent grief diſtreſs'd,
Nor leſs the future fears. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* EURYNOME.

*Rho.* My thoughts are all perplex'd amid this maze
Of dreadful miſery.

*Eury.* O Rhodope!
Where is my ſon?

*Rho.* Think on thyſelf, inhuman!
Conſult thy ſafety, if thou prizeſt life,
And hide thee from the angry victors' ſight.

*Eury.* I prize not life, unleſs I find Learchus.

*Rho.* Forget a name that's hateful to the world;
At once thy ſhame and mine.

*Eury.* What means this anger?
Didſt thou not ſave him?

*Rho.* Yes—with ſhame I own it.

*Eury.* I hope thou doſt but feign this indignation;
Since when thy lips once call'd for vengeance on him,
He was thy heart's delight.

*Rho.* But now my hatred.

The rural maid, with terror mov'd,
Deteſts the roſe which once ſhe lov'd,
Since late her eyes a ſnake ſurvey'd,
Conceal'd beneath the fragrant ſhade.

The

The bird attempts the bough no more,
From which with pain he 'ſcap'd before;
No more the wary warbler ſings,
Where once he ſnar'd his trembling wings.
[*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

EURYNOME *alone.*

In ſeeking thus my ſon, I loſe myſelf;
But what is life without him? Well I know
Learchus guilty, yet I love him ſtill.
His crimes deſtroy my peace; but in my heart
Affection reigns unquench'd, nay ſtronger grows
The more I find him hated by the world.
Tell me, Almighty powers! do we derive
A curſe or bleſſing from a mother's name?

At once deſpair and grief I find
With ſudden frenzy fire my mind,
A rage by parents only known:
A hapleſs ſon, by danger preſt,
So deep is graven in my breaſt,
That in his woes I loſe my own. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE IX.

*A view of the ſea ſhore, with the ſhips belonging to* LEARCHUS; *a plank laid from one of them to the ſhore. On one ſide appear the ruins of the temple of* VENUS; *on the other the remains of an ancient port of* LEMNOS.

JASON, HYPSIPYLE, RHODOPE, *Argonauts.* LEARCHUS *and* THOAS *appear on the deck of one of the ſhips,* THOAS *in chains, and* LEARCHUS *with a dagger in his hand.*

*Jaſ.* Compoſe thyſelf, Hypſipyle; at length
We have reach'd the traitor: follow me, my friends,
To yonder ſhips: now rouze your ſouls to fury;
Be pity baniſh'd: let conſuming flames
Devour the ſails, and ocean's whelming waves
Engulph the veſſels: ſpread the horrid ſlaughter,
That fated vengeance may behold the tide
Red with perfidious blood.

*Lear.* Then be it ſo;
But firſt let Thoas bleed.

*Hyp.* O hold!—

*Rho.* Inhuman!

*Jaſ.* What rage tranſports thee thus?

*Hyp.* My father! huſband!

O! hear,

O! hear, Learchus, hear me—pitying Heaven!—
I can no more—

*Lear.* Why, why, Hypſipyle,
This unavailing grief? On thee depends
His life, or death: aſcend this ſhip, conſent
To be Learchus' wife; and if the daughter
Reward my faithful love, the father lives.

*Hyp.* What do I hear! O Jaſon!

*Jaſ.* Dar'ſt thou, wretch,
Pronounce the horrid compact? 'tis in vain
I ſtrive to curb my righteous fury longer.

*Hyp.* Have pity, Jaſon! if thou ſhould'ſt aſſail him,
He lifts his impious hand againſt my father.

*Jaſ.* Ten thouſand furies ſtruggle in my breaſt!

*Lear.* See, Thoas, ſee——behold thy pious daughter;
With what a zeal ſhe haſtes to ſave thy life.
Thy blood ſhall anſwer her relentleſs ſcorn;
I have endur'd enough. [*about to ſtab* Thoas.

*Hyp.* O hold!—I come. [*goes towards the ſhip.*

*Tho.* What would'ſt thou do, my daughter! Canſt thou thus
Forget what's owing to thyſelf and me?
I little thought that e'er Hypſipyle
Would prove her father's ſhame! Have I not bred thee

In

In virtues worthy of a prince's nuptials,
Not to partake an impious pirate's bed?
And would'ſt thou now become the wretched mother
Of robbers, not of heroes!

*Hyp.* Teach me then
Some better means to ſave thee.

*Tho.* Save me thus.
Aſſert the honour of my blood; reflect not
It coſt thy father's life; or if the thought
Will riſe, let it but ſtrengthen thy reſolve
To guard my fame unſullied: live, Hypſipyle,
Live with thy faithful lord, and reign for me,
And if the days I loſe to thine are added,
I've liv'd, I've reign'd enough.

*Rho.* O fortitude!

*Jaſ.* O generous ſentiments!

*Hyp.* Does not ſuch virtue
Soften thee yet Learchus!

*Lear.* No: it rather
Incites my fury.

*Hyp.* Muſt I then—

*Lear.* No more;
Yield, or he dies.

*Hyp.* O! let theſe tears prevail:
Thou art enough reveng'd for all my ſcorn:
Let this ſuffice, Learchus: will not this
Appeaſe

Appeaſe thy dreadful rage? Muſt thou behold me,
A wretched object kneeling at thy feet?
Then ſee me proſtrate thus— [*kneels.*

*Lear.* My ſoul is fix'd;
Come, or thy father dies.

*Hyp.* Barbarian! traitor! [*riſes in a rage.*
Yes, I will come; and Hell with me ſhall bring
Her blackeſt horrors: on the rites abhorr'd
Megæra ſhall attend, with dire Alecto:
But I will prove a fury worſe than all.
Yes, I will come; but it ſhall be to tear
That treacherous heart from thy deteſted boſom:
Monſter of cruelty, I come!

*Lear.* Then haſte,
Or now he falls beneath my vengeful hand.
[*about to ſtab him.*

*Hyp.* Behold I come—the ſtroke forbear:
[*to* Learchus.
Is there no pity in the ſky?
Still let me thy remembrance ſhare— [*to* Jaſon.
My ſoul diſſolves!—I faint!—I die!

What flinty heart could here refrain
To melt with ſympathy of woe?
What cruel eyes could view my pain,
And yet forbid the tears to flow?
[Hypſipyle *weeping, walks ſlowly towards the ſhip, looking back tenderly on* Jaſon.

*Jaſ.* Wilt thou forſake me thus, Hypſipyle?
And would'ſt thou, impious ſavage!——I'm diſtracted!
Where ſhall I turn for counſel!—Barbarous Gods!

## SCENE LAST.

*Enter* EURYNOME.

*Eury.* And have I found thee then at length, my ſon!

*Lear.* Fly mother, ſave thyſelf.

*Jaſ.* Inhuman woman!
'Tis not in vain that fate has ſent thee hither.
[*ſtopping her.*
Stay thee, Hypſipyle:—look here, thou traitor!
Let Thoas free, or lo! this hand cuts ſhort
Thy mother's life. [*draws a dagger,* Hypſipyle
[*ſtops ſhort as ſhe is about to enter the ſhip.*

*Lear.* Say'ſt thou!

*Eury.* What can this mean!

*Rho.* O unexpected change!

*Lear.* Forbear in her
To puniſh my miſdeeds. 'Tis I alone
Am Jaſon's foe.

*Jaſ.* My rage permits not now
A calm reflection: all are Jaſon's foes
That hate not thee: a thouſand cruelties
Pollute her ſoul: but were ſhe innocent,
I ſhould

I ſhould not bluſh to make her now the victim:
'Tis guilt enough to be Learchus' mother.

*Rho.* He ſeems confounded.

*Hyp.* Mighty Gods! aſſiſt us.

*Jaſ.* Wretch, art thou yet reſolv'd.

*Lear.* I am reſolv'd.
Her life is yours: but let Hypſipyle
Come and fulfill the contract we have made.

*Rho.* Inhuman monſter!

*Hyp.* Moſt unnatural ſavage!

*Jaſ.* Then thus to you, infernal deities,
I here devote this horrid ſacrifice.

*Lear.* Why do I tremble thus! [*aſide.*

*Jaſ.* It reſts on you,
Upon the ſon to avenge the mother's death;
Die, hapleſs wretch! [*about to ſtab her.*

*Lear.* O hold! forbear to ſtrike,
The victory is thine.

*Rho.* Nature at length
Has touch'd his harden'd breaſt.

*Eury.* My dear Learchus,
To thee I owe my life.

*Lear.* Eurynome,
Thou little know'ſt thy ſon—call not this pity
My virtue, 'tis my ſhame. I would have ſeen
Thy death unmov'd, but reſolution fails me:
Spite of myſelf I tremble, ſhrink with terror;

And feel my blood congeal within my veins.
Why was I not by nature fix'd in goodneſs,
Or more confirm'd a villain? Coward heart!
'Tis thou, and thou alone that haſt undone me;
Then thus with thee begin my juſt revenge.
[*ſtabs himſelf.*

*Eury.* O hold!—What haſt thou done?—

*Lear.* I neither hope,
Nor will accept their pardon; as he liv'd,
So ſhall Learchus die. [*leaps into the ſea.*

*Eury.* I faint!—O Heaven!
[*ſwoons, and is carried off.*

*Rho.* This is your work, ye righteous powers!

*Jaſ.* My friends!
Haſte and unbind the king.
[*the Argonauts go to the ſhip.*

*Hyp.* My deareſt lord!
I ſcarcely yet can ſtill my beating heart.

*Rho.* What ſtrange events this day has ſeen!

*Tho.* Ah prince!
[*coming from the ſhip.*
My daughter!

*Hyp.* Deareſt father!

*Jaſ.* O my lord!

*Hyp.* And is it given me once again to kiſs
That honour'd hand?

*Tho.* And do I once again

Thus

Thus claſp thee to my breaſt?

*Rho.* Now, faithful lovers,
Propitious Hymen ſoon ſhall recompenſe
Your ſorrows paſt.

*Tho.* Firſt let us to the temple
To thank the gracious powers: for, O my children!
How vain is every human enterpriſe,
If not begun with duty to the Gods!

CHORUS.

What frenzy muſt his ſoul poſſeſs,
Whoſe hopes on evil deeds depend?
For though the wicked meet ſucceſs,
Yet peace can ne'er their ſteps attend.

And even in life's ſereneſt ſtate,
Shall Vice receive her ſecret ſting;
As Virtue, though depreſs'd by fate,
Herſelf her own reward ſhall bring.

THE END OF THE THIRD ACT.

# T I T U S.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

TITUS VESPASIAN, Emperor of Rome.

VITELLIA, Daughter to the Emperor VITELLIUS.

SERVILIA, Sister to SEXTUS, in love with ANNIUS.

SEXTUS, Friend of TITUS, in love with VITELLIA.

ANNIUS, Friend of SEXTUS, in love with SERVILIA.

PUBLIUS, PRÆFECT of the PRÆTORS.

CHORUS of SENATORS and PEOPLE.

The SCENE lies in ROME.

# TITUS.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*The apartments of* VITELLIA, *commanding a proſpect of the* TYBER.

VITELLIA, SEXTUS.

*Vitel.* But wherefore, Sextus, doſt thou ſtill return
To fill my ears with fruitleſs repetitions?
I know that Lentulus, ſeduc'd by thee,
Is ripe for inſurrection; that his friends
Wait but the ſignal to begin the tumult;
That when the flames ſhall ſeize the Capitol,
Thy followers will unite their force to aſſail
Unguarded Titus; that each brave aſſociate
Will for diſtinction, on his mantle wear,
O'er his right arm, a badge of crimſon hue.
All this from thee a thouſand times I've heard;
But ſee no proſpect yet for my revenge:
Or muſt we wait till Titus, in my ſight,
Shall give his faithleſs hand to Berenice,
And ſeat her on the throne uſurp'd from me?
Speak—whence this long delay?

*Sex.* O mighty Gods!

*Vitel.* What means that ſigh? Give me to know the cauſe
Of thy ſo frequent and myſterious change.
Whene'er thou leav'ſt me, all thy ſoul ſeems fir'd
Even to my wiſh; but when again I ſee thee,
Thou art cold, irreſolute. From whence this ſtrange
Perpetual ſtrife of boldneſs and timidity?

*Sex.* Then hear, Vitellia; hear my ſecret heart.
When thou art preſent, thou haſt all my thoughts;
I have no will but thine; I catch thy fury;
Eager I burn to avenge thy wrongs; and Titus
Appears to merit all thy rage can threaten.
But when I leave thee, and return to him,
Forgive me while I ſpeak it, Titus then
Appears all goodneſs, and diſarms my purpoſe.

*Vitel.* Since thus——

*Sex.* Yet ere thou chid'ſt me, let me lay
My ſoul before thee: thou requir'ſt revenge,
But Cæſar claims my faith: thy proffer'd love
Impels me to the fatal deed; but Titus,
With ties of gratitude, reſtrains my hand:
Love pleads for thee, while duty pleads for him.
Yet oft as I again behold Vitellia,
I find new charms to faſcinate my heart;
And oft as I again contemplate Titus,
I find new virtues claim my admiration.
My boſom pants to prove its zeal for thee,
But dares not turn a traitor to its prince.

Alas! I cannot live if thou art loſt;
And, if I gain thee, I deteſt myſelf.
Now chide me if thou wilt.

*Vitel.* Ungrateful, no:
Thou merit'ſt not my anger.

*Sex.* Think, Vitellia,
Reflect once more—Ah! let us not, in Titus,
Deprive the world of all it holds moſt dear,
Take from ourſelves a friend, from Rome a father!
Look through the records of antiquity,
You ſeek in vain his equal: can your mind
Paint one more generous or merciful?
Speak to him of rewards, his treaſures ſeem
Too poor to anſwer merit: ſpeak of puniſhment,
His goodneſs finds excuſe for every crime:
He theſe forgives for inexperienc'd youth,
And thoſe for hoary age: in ſome he ſpares
The unſullied fame of an illuſtrious houſe;
And pities others for their abject ſtate.
He meaſures not his life by length of years,
But acts of goodneſs done; and thinks the day
Is loſt, that has not made ſome ſubject happy.

*Vitel.* Yet ſtill he reigns——

*Sex.* He reigns, 'tis true, but claims
No ſervice that a Roman ſcorns to pay.
He reigns indeed, but o'er ſo vaſt an empire,
While Titus watches with unceaſing care,
What envied privilege attends his ſtation

But

But empty titles, and the name of Cæſar,
The burden his, the bleſſings all our own?

*Vitel.* And dar'ſt thou to my face, with odious praiſe,
Extol my hated foe? Haſt thou forgot
This hero, fam'd for clemency, enjoys
The throne his father firſt uſurp'd from mine?
And has he not betray'd, nay even reduc'd me
(This is his greateſt crime) almoſt to love him?
And now, perfidious! to recall again
His Berenice to the ſhores of Tyber!
He might at leaſt from Rome's imperial beauties
Have found a rival worthier of Vitellia:
But, Sextus, to prefer an exile to me,
A rude barbarian queen—

*Sex.* Thou know'ſt, Vitellia,
That Berenice came unbid to Rome.

*Vitel.* Relate ſuch tales to inexperienc'd childhood:
I know their mutual paſſion, know what tears
Were ſhed when laſt they parted: well I know
He treats her now with every mark of honour.
There is no room for doubt—who does not ſee it?
Perfidious! he adores her ſtill!—

*Sex.* Ah! princeſs!
Are you then jealous?

*Vitel.* Jealous!

*Sex.* Yes, Vitellia.

*Vitel.*

*Vitel.* Muſt I be jealous then unleſs I tamely
Submit to bear my wrongs without repining?

*Sex.* And yet——

*Vitel.* And yet thou haſt not heart to win me!

*Sex.* O were I free——

*Vitel.* Thou art—I here releaſe thee
From every promiſe made: I ſhall not want
Some nobler hand to execute my vengeance.

*Sex.* Hear me——

*Vitel.* I've heard enough.

*Sex.* Yet ſtay——

*Vitel.* Farewell!

*Sex.* My life! Vitellia!—O forſake me not—
Where would'ſt thou go? Forgive what I have ſaid:
I was to blame—believe me—I repent:
Speak, ſpeak, direct, command the ſword of Sextus,
Thou art my oracle, my fate's in thee.

*Vitel.* Before the ſun regain the weſtern waves,
Let Titus periſh; let not——

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ANNIUS.

*Ann.* Sextus, Cæſar
Demands thy preſence.

*Vitel.* Loſe not theſe ſhort moments
Which Titus ſteals from love and Berenice.

*Ann.* Vitellia, no—thou wrong'ſt our mighty hero;
Not more is Titus ruler of the world
Than maſter of himſelf: for Berenice
At his command already is departed.

*Sex.* How, Annius!

*Vitel.* Say'ſt thou?

*Ann.* Yes; you well may gaze,
When Rome with joy and wonder weeps: myſelf
Can ſcarce believe it true; yet I, Vitellia,
Was witneſs to their ſolemn laſt farewell.

*Vitel.* O my reviving hopes! [*aſide.*

*Sex.* Triumphant virtue!

*Vitel.* O that Vitellia had been preſent there,
To hear that haughty beauty rail on Titus!

*Ann.* No; ſhe was ſoftneſs all and tenderneſs:
She went indeed, but went with full conviction
That Titus lov'd her; that his heart confeſs'd,
No leſs than hers, the pangs of ſeparation.

*Vitel.* She might be yet deceiv'd.

*Ann.* Full well we ſaw
Titus conſtrain'd to ſummon all the hero,
To quell the lover riſing in his boſom.
'Tis true, he conquer'd, but with painful ſtruggle:
He ſunk not with misfortune, yet he felt
Her keeneſt arrows, while his looks confeſs'd
The godlike ſufferings of determin'd virtue;

A dreadful

A dreadful ſtrife and painful victory!

*Vitel.* Perhaps I was too warm, and Titus yet
May prove leſs guilty than my fears preſag'd.
[*aſide.*
Sextus, forbear to execute my orders;
All is not yet mature. [*aſide* to Sextus.

*Sex.* [*to her.*] Wilt thou forbid me
To gaze upon thee, to lament in ſilence?
Unjuſt Vitellia!

*Vitel.* What does Sextus mean?
Of what doſt thou complain?

*Sex.* Of nothing—Heavens!
I dare not ſpeak, though torture wrings my ſoul.

*Vitel.* If thou would'ſt hope my love to gain,
Lay by thy cauſeleſs fears;
Nor with perpetual doubts in vain
Moleſt Vitellia's ears.

Who thinks to find his miſtreſs juſt,
Muſt ſtill her truth believe;
But he, who fears her faith to truſt,
Inſtructs her to deceive. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE III.

SEXTUS, ANNIUS.

*Ann.* Now, Sextus, is the time to make me happy;
I have thy promiſe for Servilia's hand,
And nothing more remains but Cæſar's ſanction
To authorize our loves: this day, my friend,
Thou may'ſt obtain it.

*Sex.* Annius, thy deſire
Becomes a law to Sextus. I'm impatient,
No leſs than thee, till our long faithful friendſhip
Is ſtrengthen'd by the ties of ſuch alliance.

*Ann.* I cannot taſte of peace without Servilia.

*Sex.* And who ſhall rob thee of thy ſoul's deſire?
Does ſhe not love thee with the tendereſt paſſion?
While Sextus breathes, is not each act of his
Devoted to thee? Is not Titus juſt?

*Ann.* I doubt not theſe—and yet methinks I fear.

In vain I ſeek to calm to reſt
The heart that flutters in my breaſt;
I feel my ſoul with fears oppreſt,
Yet know not whence they flow.
How anxious is the lover's fate!
Ten thouſand doubts perplex his ſtate:
Fond hopes of future bliſs create
But certain preſent woe. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

SEXTUS *alone.*

Aſſiſt me, Gods! by ſlow degrees I loſe
Dominion o'er myſelf: this fatal paſſion
Engroſſes all my thoughts: Vitellia ſhines
The ſtar that guides my fate: the haughty fair
Perceives her power, and cruelly inſults me;
And yet I dare not murmur. O the force
Of ſov'reign beauty! you who hold from Heaven
This envied gift, take not by her example:
Rule o'er mankind, but rule with milder ſway.

Let rebel minds receive your chain,
With rigour there your power maintain;
But thoſe, whoſe hearts your reign confeſs,
With barbarous pleaſure ne'er oppreſs.

No

No Thracian is ſo cruel found,
In diſtant Thrace's ſavage ground,
But ſpares the wretch, who caſts away
His recreant arms, and yields the day. [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

*The ſcene repreſents a place before the temple of* JUPITER STATOR, *celebrated for the meeting of the Senate: behind is a view of part of the Roman Forum, decorated with arches, obeliſks and trophies: on the ſide is a diſtant proſpect of the Palatine-hill, and a great part of the ſacred way: a front view of the Capitol, which is aſcended by a magnificent flight of ſteps.*

PUBLIUS *and the Roman Senators: the Deputies of the ſubject provinces attending to preſent their annual tribute to the Senate. While the enſuing Chorus is ſung,* TITUS *deſcends from the Capitol, preceded by the Lictors, followed by the Prætors, accompanied by* SEXTUS *and* ANNIUS, *and ſurrounded by a numerous crowd of people.*

CHORUS.

O guardian Gods! in whom we truſt
To watch the Roman fate;
Preſerve in Titus, brave and juſt,
The glory of the ſtate!

For

For ever round our Cæſar's brows
The ſacred laurel bloom:
In him, for whom we breathe our vows,
Preſerve the weal of Rome.

Long may your glorious gift remain,
And long our times adorn;
So ſhall this age the envy gain
Of ages yet unborn.

*Pub.* This day the Senate ſtile thee, mighty Cæſar,
The father of thy country; never yet
More juſt in their decree.

*Ann.* Thou art not only
Thy country's father, but her guardian God.
And ſince thy virtues have already ſoar'd
Beyond mortality, receive thoſe honours
We pay to Heaven. The Senate have decreed
To build a ſtately temple, where thy name
Shall ſtand enroll'd among the powers divine,
And Tyber worſhip at the fane of Titus.

*Pub.* Theſe treaſures, gather'd from the annual tribute
Of ſubject provinces, we dedicate
To effect this pious work: diſdain not, Titus,
This public token of our grateful homage.

*Tit.* Romans! believe that every wiſh of Titus
Is center'd in your love; but let not therefore,
Your

Your love, forgetful of its proper bounds,
Reflect diſgrace on Titus, or yourſelves.
Is there a name more dear, more tender to me,
Than father of my people? Yet even this
I rather ſeek to merit than obtain.
My ſoul would imitate the mighty Gods
By virtuous deeds, but ſhudders at the thought
Of impious emulation. He who dares
To rank himſelf their equal, forfeits all
His future title to their guardian care.
O! fatal folly when preſumptuous pride
Forgets the weakneſs of mortality!
Yet think not I refuſe your proffer'd treaſures,
Their uſe alone be chang'd.——Then hear my purpoſe.
Veſuvius, raging with unwonted fury,
Pours from her gaping jaws a lake of fire,
Shakes the firm earth, and ſpreads deſtruction round
The ſubject fields and cities: trembling fly
The pale inhabitants, while all who 'ſcape
The flaming ruin, meagre want purſues.
Behold an object claims your thoughts; diſpenſe
Theſe treaſures to relieve our ſuffering brethren:
Thus, Romans! thus your temple build for Titus.

*Ann.* O truly great!

*Pub.* How poor were all rewards,
How poor were praiſe to ſuch tranſcendent virtue!

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

O guardian Gods! in whom we truſt
To watch the Roman fate;
Preſerve in Titus, brave and juſt,
The glory of the ſtate.

*Tit.* Enough—enough——Sextus, my friend, draw near;
Depart not, Annius: all beſides retire.
[*all go out but* Titus, Sextus *and* Annius.

*Ann.* Now, Sextus, plead my cauſe.
[*aſide to* Sextus.

*Sex.* And could you, ſir,
Reſign your beauteous queen?——

*Tit.* Alas! my Sextus,
That moment ſure was dreadful—yet I thought—
No more——'tis paſt! the ſtruggle's o'er! ſhe's gone!
Thanks to the Gods! I've gain'd the painful conqueſt;
'Tis juſt I now complete the taſk begun:
The greater part is done; the leſs remains.

*Sex.* What more remains, my lord?

*Tit.* To take from Rome
The leaſt ſuſpicion that the hand of Titus
Shall e'er be join'd in marriage to the queen.

*Sex.* For this the queen's departure may ſuffice.

*Tit.*

*Tit.* No, Sextus; once before ſhe left our city,
And yet return'd—twice have we met, the third
May prove a fatal meeting: while my bed
Receives no other partner, all who know
My ſoul's affection, may with ſhow of reaſon
Believe the place reſerv'd for Berenice.
Too deeply Rome abhors the name of queen,
But wiſhes on the Imperial ſeat to view
A daughter of her own——let Titus then
Fulfill the wiſh of Rome. Since love in vain
Form'd my firſt choice, let friendſhip fix the ſecond.
Sextus, to thee ſhall Cæſar's blood unite;
This day thy ſiſter is my bride——

*Sex.* Servilia?

*Tit.* Servilia.

*Ann.* Wretched Annius! [*aſide.*

*Sex.* O ye Gods!
Annius is loſt! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Thou hear'ſt not; ſpeak, my friend,
What means this ſilence?

*Sex.* Can I ſpeak, my lord?
Your goodneſs overwhelms my grateful mind——
Fain would I——

*Ann.* Sextus ſuffers for his friend! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Declare thyſelf with freedom, every wiſh
Shall find a grant.

*Sex.*

*Sex.* Be juſt, my ſoul, to Annius: [*aſide.*

*Ann.* Annius, be firm. [*aſide.*

*Sex.* O Titus——

*Ann.* Mighty Cæſar!

I know the heart of Sextus: from our infancy
A mutual tenderneſs has grown between us.
I read his thoughts; with modeſt eſtimation
He rates his worth, as diſproportion'd far
To ſuch alliance, nor reflects that Cæſar
Ennobles whom he favours. Sacred ſir!
Purſue your purpoſe.——Can a bride be found
More worthy of the empire or yourſelf?
Beauty and virtue in Servilia meet;
She ſeem'd, whene'er I view'd her, born to reign;
And what I oft preſag'd, your choice confirms.

*Sex.* Is this the voice of Annius? Do I dream? [*aſide.*

*Tit.* 'Tis well: thou, Annius, with diſpatchful care,
Convey the tidings to her.—Come, my Sextus,
Caſt every vain and anxious thought aſide:
Thou ſhalt with me ſo far partake of greatneſs,
I will exalt thee to ſuch height of honour,
That little of the diſtance ſhall remain
At which the Gods have plac'd thee now from Titus.

*Sex.* Forbear, my lord, O! moderate this goodneſs,

Leſt Sextus, poor and bankrupt in his thanks,
Appear ungrateful for the gifts of Cæſar.

*Tit.* What would'ſt thou leave me, friend, if thou deny'ſt me
The glorious privilege of doing good?

This fruit the monarch boaſts alone,
The only fruit that glads a throne:
All, all beſides is toil and pain,
Where ſlavery drags the galling chain.

Shall I my only joy forego?
No more my kind protection ſhow,
To thoſe by fortune's frown purſu'd?
No more exalt each virtuous friend,
No more a bounteous hand extend,
To enrich the worthy and the good!

[*Exit with* Sextus.

## SCENE VI.

ANNIUS *alone.*

Shall I repent?——O no——I've acted well,
As ſuits a generous lover: had I now
Depriv'd her of the throne, to enſure her mine,
I might have lov'd myſelf, but not Servilia.
Lay by, my heart, thy wonted tenderneſs;
She who was late thy miſtreſs, is become
Thy ſovereign; let thy paſſion then be chang'd

To diſtant homage——but, behold, ſhe's here!—
O Heaven! methinks ſhe ne'er before appear'd
So beauteous in my eyes!

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* SERVILIA.

*Serv.* My life, my love!

*Ann.* Ceaſe, ceaſe, Servilia; for 'tis criminal
To call me ſtill by thoſe endearing names.

*Serv.* And wherefore?

*Ann.* Cæſar has elected thee——
O torture!——for the partner of his bed——
He bade me bring myſelf——I cannot bear it—
The tidings to thee——O my breaking heart!
And I——I have been once——I cannot ſpeak!
Empreſs, farewell!

*Serv.* What may this mean?—Yet ſtay—
Servilia Cæſar's wife!——Ah! why?——

*Ann.* Becauſe
Beauty and virtue never can be found
More worthy of the throne.—My life!—OHeaven!
What would I dare to ſay?—Permit me, empreſs,
Permit me to retire.

*Serv.* And wilt thou leave me
In this confuſion? Speak, relate at full
By what ſtrange means, declare each circumſtance—

*Ann.* I'm loſt unleſs I go——My heart's beſt treaſure!

My tongue its wonted theme purſues,
Accuſtom'd on thy name to dwell;
Then let my former love excuſe
What from my lips unwary fell.

I hop'd that reaſon would ſuffice
To calm th' emotions love might raiſe:
But, ah! unguarded, fond ſurpriſe
Each ſecret, I would hide, betrays. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

SERVILIA *alone.*

Shall I be wife to Cæſar! in one moment
Diſſolve my former ties! conſign to oblivion
Such wondrous faith?——Ah, no! from me the throne
Can never merit ſuch a ſacrifice:
Fear it not, Annius, it ſhall never be.

Thee long I've lov'd, and ſtill I'll love;
Thou wert the firſt, and thou ſhalt prove
The laſt dear object of my flame.
The love which firſt our breaſt inſpires,
When free from guilt, ſuch ſtrength acquires,
It laſts till death conſumes our frame. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE IX.

*An apartment in the Imperial palace, upon the Palatine-hill.*

TITUS, PUBLIUS *with a paper.*

*Tit.* What means that paper, Publius?

*Pub.* This contains
The names of thoſe who raſhly have defam'd
The ſacred memory of our Cæſars dead.

*Tit.* Such inquiſition, uſeleſs now to them,
Can only furniſh fraud with various ways
To enſnare the innocent: I from this hour
Aboliſh it, and that the informer's guile
Henceforth may ſtand defeated of its aim,
I here decree the accuſer ſhall incur
The penalties that wait upon the guilty.

*Pub.* But juſtice——

*Tit.* O! if juſtice ſhould exert
Her utmoſt rigour, ſoon the earth would prove
A lonely waſte.——Where ſhall we find the man
Within whoſe breaſt no guilt, no little frailty
Has ever lurk'd? Let us but view ourſelves.
Believe me, ſeldom has a judge been known
Free from that crime for which he dooms the offender.

*Pub.* Yet ſurely puniſhments——

*Tit.*

*Tit.* If theſe are frequent,
They loſe their weight; and chaſtiſement becomes
Familiar to the wicked; they perceive
What numbers are partakers in their guilt:
'Tis dangerous to proclaim how few are virtuous.

*Pub.* But ſome there are, my lord, whoſe daring tongues
Have even attack'd your name.

*Tit.* And what imports it?
If thoughtleſs levity incite them to it,
I heed them not; if folly, they've my pity;
If juſtice prompt them, I am thankful for it;
And if they're urg'd by malice, I forgive them.

*Pub.* At leaſt——

## SCENE X.

*Enter* SERVILIA.

*Serv.* Thus proſtrate at the feet of Cæſar——

*Tit.* Servilia! Empreſs!

*Serv.* O my lord! forbear:
Firſt hear me, ere you grace me with ſuch titles;
I come to unfold a weighty ſecret——

*Tit.* Publius,
Withdraw awhile, but wait within——

[Publius *retires.*

*Serv.* That you,
O generous monarch! from the numerous fair
That

That grace your court, all worthier far than I,
Should on Servilia fix to ſhare the bed
Of mighty Cæſar, is ſo vaſt an honour,
As might with tranſport warm the coldeſt breaſt.
I know the value of the proffer'd glory,
I would be grateful, and muſt ſhow it thus.
Your choice is turn'd on one, whom yet, perhaps,
You little know, and I ſhould wrong your goodneſs
By further ſilence, therefore come to lay
My ſoul before you.

*Tit.* Speak.

*Serv:* The earth has none
That more adores your virtues than Servilia:
For you I'm all reſpect and admiration,
But for my heart——be not diſpleas'd——

*Tit.* Go on.

*Serv.* My heart, my lord, no more is mine; for this
Has Annius long poſſeſs'd; ere yet I knew it,
I lov'd him, and have felt no ſecond paſſion:
A mutual ſympathy inſpir'd our ſouls;
And, O! I find I never ſhall forget him.
Even from the throne my mind would ſtill purſue
Its wonted courſe. I know 'tis criminal
To oppoſe the will of Cæſar: yet my duty
Bids me reveal my thoughts before my ſovereign:
Then if he ſtill perſiſt in his deſign
To take me for his bride, my hand is his.

*Tit.*

*Tit.* I thank ye, Gods! this once, at leaſt, I've ſeen
Truth undiſguis'd; at length I've met with one
Who ventures to diſpleaſe by ſpeech ſincere.
Thou canſt not tell, Servilia, how thou charm'ſt me;
How haſt thou given me double cauſe of wonder!
Annius prefers thy glory to his peace;
And thou refuſeſt empire, to preſerve
Thy faith to him: and ſhall I then deſtroy
Such love and conſtancy?—Ah! no—the heart
Of Titus breeds not ſuch ungenerous thoughts.
My daughter (thou ſhalt find me now thy father,
And not thy conſort) baniſh from thy breaſt
Each needleſs doubt; for Annius is thy huſband:
Myſelf will join the wiſh'd-for knot. May Heaven
Vouchſafe with me to bleſs the happy nuptials,
And may from you a future race proceed,
To glad your country with their parents' virtues!

*Serv.* O Titus! Emperor! Joy of human kind!
How ſhall my grateful ſoul expreſs——

*Tit.* Servilia,
If thou would'ſt ſhow thy gratitude to Cæſar,
Inſpire each mind with candour like thy own.
Proclaim it to the world, that more I prize
The harſheſt truth, than falſehood's flattering voice.

Did

Did every ſubject near the throne,
Like thee a mind ſincere poſſeſs;
Such cares would not ſurround a crown,
But all be happineſs and peace.

The rulers of mankind no more
Would ſearch in vain the ſecret heart;
No longer truth diſguis'd explore
Through all the mazy wiles of art. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* VITELLIA.

*Serv.* O happy day! [*to herſelf.*

*Vitel.* May I before my ſovereign
Pay down the tribute of my earlieſt homage;
Adore that face, for which the breaſt of Titus,
Wounded by love, has loſt its wonted peace?

*Serv.* Inſulting woman! yet for my revenge
Let her be ſtill deceiv'd—[*aſide.*]—Farewell!

*Vitel.* Servilia
Already deigns not to behold me.——Heavens!
And does ſhe thus depart, forſake me thus?

*Serv.* Complain not if I now depart,
Or, if thou wilt, complain of love;
Love rules the motions of my heart,
And where he calls my feet muſt move.

Nor

Nor deem it ſtrange, that from thy ſight,
Tranſported thus I'm borne away
By that exceſs of vaſt delight,
That leads my every ſenſe aſtray. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XII.

VITELLIA *alone.*

And muſt I ſuffer ſuch diſdainful treatment?
With what contempt already ſhe beholds me!
Inhuman Titus! is it not enough,
That Berenice was to me preferr'd?
Am I the loweſt then of woman-kind?
All, all are worthy thee except Vitellia!
Tremble, ungrateful man, to think thou wrong'ſt me:
This day thy blood——

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* SEXTUS.

*Sex.* My life!——

*Vitel.* What tidings bring'ſt thou?
Say, is the Capitol in flames?——Conſum'd?—
Where, where is Lentulus?—Is Titus puniſh'd?

*Sex.* Nothing has yet been done.

*Vitel.* Ha! nothing done!

And

And doſt thou yet return ſo boldly to me?
What are thy merits that thou dar'ſt preſume
To call me now thy life?

*Sex.* 'Twas your command
The blow ſhould be ſuſpended.

*Vitel.* Haſt thou not
Heard of my laſt affront? And doſt thou ſtill
Wait for a ſecond bidding? Tell me how
Thou e'er wilt hope to be eſteem'd a lover,
When thou ſo little canſt explore my thoughts?

*Sex.* O! might one cauſe but juſtify——

*Vitel.* One cauſe?
Thou haſt a thouſand—let what paſſion will
Direct and hold dominion o'er thy heart.
Is fame thy wiſh? I bid thee free thy country,
Shake off her chains, and crown thy name with honour:
Our age ſhall boaſt her Brutus. Is thy ſoul
For great ambition form'd? Behold a path
To empire open: thoſe that own my cauſe,
My friends, are thine, my title to the throne
I will enforce for thee. Say, can this hand
Complete thy happineſs? Receive it now.
Fly, fly with ſpeed; revenge me, I am thine:
Return all ſtain'd with his perfidious blood:
Thou ſhalt become my only joy, my bleſſing,
My ſoul's beſt treaſure.——Will not this ſuffice?
Hear yet, and after linger if thou canſt:

Know

Know then that Titus till this hour I've lov'd,
That this alone produc'd my ſcorn for thee:
That, if he lives, I may perhaps repent;
That even again, (I dare not truſt myſelf)
I may return to love him.——Now, be gone:
If love, ambition, glory will not move thee;
If thou canſt bear to hear a rival's name,
A rival who may rob thee of my heart,
Thou'rt then a wretch beneath Vitellia's ſcorn.

*Sex.* How many ways am I beſet!—Enough,
Forbear!—Thou haſt inſpir'd me now, Vitellia,
With all thy fury: ſoon ſhalt thou behold
The Capitol in flames, and view this ſword
Plung'd in the breaſt of Titus——Mighty Gods!
What ſudden coldneſs freezes in my veins!

*Vitel.* Why art thou thoughtful thus?

*Sex.* Alas! Vitellia——

*Vitel.* I know it well——already thou repent'ſt.

*Sex.* No, I repent not—but——

*Vit.* No more perplex me.——
I ſee, ingrate! thy paſſion is but feign'd;
Fool that I was! I thought thy words ſincere,
And almoſt I began to love thee——Hence,
Avoid my ſight, and think of me no more!

*Sex.* Yet hold—for, O! I yield: already ſee
I fly to ſerve you.

*Vitel.* I can truſt no further;
Thou wilt anew deceive me, in the midſt

Of action thou'lt again remember———

*Sex.* No:
Puniſh me, Love, if I again deceive you.

*Vitel.* Haſte then: what mean'ſt thou? Wherefore linger thus?

*Sex.* I go: meantime thy ſcorn reſtrain,
Reſtore me to thy grace again,
And nothing ſhalt thou aſk in vain;
I'll act whate'er thou canſt require.
O! look, and every ſcruple dies;
To avenge thy cauſe thy lover flies;
The charms of thoſe all-conquering eyes
Alone ſhall his remembrance fire. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIV.

VITELLIA *alone.*

Yes, Titus, thou ſhalt find this ſlighted beauty
Is not ſo mean; at leaſt it can ſuffice
To taint the allegiance of thy neareſt friends,
If found too weak to bend thy ſtubborn heart:
Thou ſhalt repent———

SCENE

## SCENE XV.

*Enter* PUBLIUS.

*Pub.* Vitellia!—art thou here?
O fly! for Cæſar haſtes to thy apartment.

*Vitel.* Cæſar! why ſeeks he me?

*Pub.* And know'ſt thou not
He has elected thee his conſort?

*Vitel.* Publius,
Vitellia brooks but ill to be derided.

*Pub.* Derided! Cæſar comes himſelf to aſk
Of thee conſent.

*Vitel.* Servilia then——

*Pub.* Servilia,
Whate'er the cauſe, rejected ſtands.

*Vitel.* And I——

*Pub.* Thou art our empreſs. Princeſs, let us go;
Cæſar expects thee.

*Vitel.* Stay awhile——O Heaven!
Sextus!—unhappy me!—Sextus!—he's gone.
Run, Publius, ſeek him out—no—rather haſte—
O I have let my rage too far tranſport me! [*aſide.*
Art thou not gone yet?

*Pub.* Whither ſhould I go?

*Vitel.*

*Vitel.* To Sextus, haſte.

*Pub.* What would'ſt thou have me ſay?

*Vitel.* Bid him return to me this inſtant; fly—
Let him not loſe a moment.

*Pub.* I am gone.
How much exceſs of joy diſtracts our ſenſe!
[*aſide.*] *Exit.*

## SCENE XVI.

VITELLIA *alone.*

What dreadful maze is this? Ah! deareſt Titus!
I own I've been unjuſt——and, O! if Sextus
Should have effected what my rage enjoin'd,
How wretched then muſt be Servilia's lot!
But wherefore ſhould I raiſe ſuch fatal omens?
Yet what if Titus ſhould repent his choice?
And why repent? What cauſe have I to fear it?
How many different thoughts poſſeſs my mind!
I'm now tranſported, now again I fear;
And all within my breaſt is wild confuſion.

Poor panting heart, and wilt thou never
Reſt within thy troubled ſeat?
Shall I view the moment ever
Thou ſhalt ceaſe a while to beat?

Cruel

Cruel ſtars! that thus torment me;
Fortune ſhifts with me in vain:
Pleaſure's ſelf cannot content me,
Pleaſure turns with me to pain. [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

## ACT. II. SCENE I.

### *PORTICOES.*

SEXTUS *alone, with the badge of the conſpirators upon his mantle.*

Ye Gods! what means this ſudden terror! whence
This tumult at my heart! I freeze! I ſhake!
I go and ſtop by turns——each breath of air,
Each ſhadow makes me ſtart——I did not think
It could have prov'd ſo hard to be a villain.——
But let us now complete our work begun:
Already at my ſignal Lentulus
Advances tow'rds the Capitol, while I
Muſt ruſh on Titus——at the precipice
I've ſet my foot, and dire neceſſity
Muſt plunge me headlong down to final ruin.
Yet, if I periſh, let me fall with courage——
With courage? Shall a traitor boaſt of courage?
Unhappy Sextus!—ha! art thou a traitor?
O dreadful name! yet this thou ſeek'ſt to gain.
And whom would'ſt thou betray? The greateſt, beſt,
The mildeſt prince on earth; to whom thou ow'ſt
All that thou haſt been, all thou art. Is this
His recompenſe? Was it for this he rais'd thee,

That thou might'ſt lift thy murderous hand againſt
him?
No——firſt gape earth and ſwallow me—Vitellia,
My heart will ne'er conſent to aid thy fury:
O rather, ere I ſee my guilt completed,
Let me fall down and at his feet expire!
Now, now the horrid plot is ripe for action!——
Then haſte, O haſte! be Lentulus prevented,
And as it will let fate diſpoſe the reſt———
Ye powers! what do I ſee! the Capitol
Already burſt in flames——yes, Lentulus
Has now begun the fatal enterprize?
And my remorſe perhaps may come too late——
Eternal Gods! preſerve the life of Titus. [*going.*

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ANNIUS.

*Ann.* Sextus, where doſt thou haſte?

*Sex.* I go, my friend—
O Gods! detain me not.

*Ann.* But whither go'ſt thou?

*Sex.* I go——thou for my ſhame too ſoon wilt
learn. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE III.

ANNIUS *alone.*

Thou for my ſhame too ſoon wilt learn! What ſecret
Lurks in theſe words! And why conceal'd from Annius?
What mean, ye powers! thoſe ghaſtly looks! that ſpeech
Confus'd? Does any danger threaten Sextus?
Sure then a faithful friend ſhould not forſake him;
Let me purſue his ſteps. [*going.*

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* SERVILIA.

*Serv.* At length, my Annius,
Again I've found thee!

*Ann.* O my ſoul's delight!
How do I ſtand indebted to thy love!
I will return this inſtant: pardon now
This haſty parting from thee.——

*Serv.* Wherefore would'ſt thou
Leave me ſo ſoon!

## SCENE V.

*Enter* PUBLIUS *and Guards.*

*Pub.* Annius, what doſt thou here?
All Rome's in tumult; and the Capitol
Is fill'd with ſpreading flames, while thou canſt waſte,
Without a bluſh, the hours in thoughtleſs love.

*Serv.* O heavenly powers!

*Ann.* The words of Sextus now
Fill me with double terror——let me ſeek him.
[*going.*

*Serv.* And wilt thou leave me thus in danger?

*Ann.* Gods!
My heart's divided between love and friendſhip!
O Publius! guard her for my ſake; in her
My life's ſole treaſure I intruſt to thee. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

SERVILIA, PUBLIUS, *Guards.*

*Serv.* Publius, what fatal accident is this?

*Pub.* Heaven grant it prove no more than accident,
And not the work of ſome dark-dealing hand,
That with a black deſign has rais'd theſe flames.

*Serv.*

*Serv.* Thou mak'ſt my blood run cold.

*Pub.* Return, Servilia,
To thy abode, and do not fear. I leave
Theſe guards for thy defence. Meantime I haſte
To find Vitellia. Titus bade me ſeek
And ſhield you both from danger.

*Serv.* Can it be?
Has Titus leiſure to reflect on us?

*Pub.* Yes; Titus thinks on all. His wiſdom ſtill
Provides for all amidſt the general tumult;
Takes every meaſure that may fruſtrate treaſon,
And re-eſtabliſh peace. O! had you ſeen him
Direct the motions of the populace:
The bold he curbs, the fearful he incites;
Threats, praiſes, promiſes, in every ſhape
His wiſdom us'd; in him at once we ſee
Rome's great defender, and the ſoldier's dread,
The friend, the prince, the citizen and father.

*Serv.* But thus ſurpris'd, how could he know—

*Pub.* Servilia,
Thou err'ſt, for Titus cannot be ſurpris'd:
No ſtroke can come that finds him unprepar'd.

What though no day of fight be near;
What though the ſeas be calm and clear;
The ſoldier ne'er on peace relies;
The ſailor doubts the mildeſt ſkies.
In ſafety that his weapon wears;
And this in calms his oar prepares;
And either ready ſtands to brave
Th' embattled field, or ſtormy wave. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VII.

SERVILIA, *Guards.*

*Serv.* To be forſaken thus by him I love;
To know the perils that he runs to engage;
To feel my heart now tremble for his ſafety;
Yet not have power to follow him in danger;
This, this indeed is torture, 'tis to bear
The pains of lingering death, yet never die.

Though I'm denied with thee to view
The perils thou may'ſt prove;
My heart's affections, ever true,
Shall follow him I love.

Love binds them in a laſting chain,
Nor ſuffers them to ſtray;
With Annius then they ſtill remain,
And ſhall for ever ſtay. [*Exit with guards.*

SCENE

## SCENE VIII.

VITELLIA, SEXTUS, *unſeen of each other.*

*Vitel.* Ah! who for pity will direct my ſteps
To find out Sextus? O unhappy woman!
I've ſought him every where, but ſought in vain:
Could I at leaſt but meet with Titus!

*Sex.* Where,
Where ſhall I hide myſelf, and whither fly?
O wretch!

*Vitel.* Ha! Sextus! hear me—— [*ſeeing him.*

*Sex.* Yes, inhuman!
Thou ſhalt be ſatisfied; behold at full
Thy dire command completed.

*Vitel.* Ah! what ſay'ſt thou?

*Sex.* Already Titus, O ye mighty powers!
Breathes from his wounded breaſt his generous ſoul.

*Vitel.* What haſt thou done?

*Sex.* Think not the deed was mine,
Repentant of my crime I flew to ſave him:
But ſcarce I came, when from the rebel band
Full at his back a traitor aim'd the blow:
"Villain! forbear"—I cried: but, O! too late!
The fatal ſtroke was given, and in the wound
The aſſaſſin left his murdering ſteel and fled:
I ſtrove to draw it forth, when with the weapon

The

The blood guſh'd out and ſtain'd my veſt; while Titus,
O all ye Gods! reel'd, ſwoon'd, and ſenſeleſs fell.

*Vitel.* Ah! hold——with him I feel myſelf expire.

*Sex.* Compaſſion, fury urg'd me to purſue
The baſe aſſaſſin, but in vain I've ſought him,
He has eſcap'd my juſt revenge——Ah! princeſs!
What wretchedneſs awaits me!. never more
Shall I have peace!—How dearly have I bought
The hopes of pleaſing thee!

*Vitel.* Deteſted wretch!
Of pleaſing me! thou fill'ſt my ſoul with horror!
Can there be found a monſter like thyſelf?
When was there ever heard a crime more dreadful?
Thou haſt taken from the world its deareſt treaſure;
From Rome whate'er it boaſted great or noble!
And who made thee diſpoſer of his days?
What guilt in him didſt thou attempt to puniſh?
The guilt of loving thee? In this indeed
Titus has err'd; but ſurely this deſerv'd not
Its puniſhment from thee!

*Sex.* Eternal Gods!
Where am I? Is it thus Vitellia ſpeaks?
And didſt not thou command———

*Vitel.* Barbarian, peace!
Think not to make me partner in thy crime:
Where

Where didſt thou learn to ſecond the diſtraction
Of an offended woman? Who but Sextus
Would not have ſeen through all my ſeeming rage
A blind exceſs of love?——O thou wert born
For my undoing! hatred from another
Were far more welcome than thy love. Inhuman!
I ſhould be now the happieſt of my ſex
Wer't not for thee! this day I ſhould receive
The hand of Titus, from the Capitol
Give laws to half mankind; and, O! might boaſt
Of innocence!—for thee, for thee I'm guilty!
I loſe the throne—I have no hopes of comfort—
And Titus——O thou villain! he is dead!

Perjur'd traitor! could'ſt thou ever
From my ſoul her half diſſever?——
Yet in guilt I bear a part,
I feel a chillneſs at my heart,
I feel my vital powers decay.
Why, inhuman! tell me why,
Didſt thou with my rage comply?
Too late I rue the dreadful day,
No tears can waſh my ſtains away. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

SEXTUS *alone.*

Thanks, cruel Gods! I've nothing now to fear:
This is the utmoſt point of human ſuffering!
Whatever

Whatever can be loſt, I've loſt already.
See friendſhip, love, Vitellia, Titus, all
By me at once betray'd? Kill me, at leaſt,
Diſtracting thoughts that rend my breaſt! ye furies
That tear my treacherous heart!—Or if you're ſlow
To execute revenge——the taſk be mine.
[*about to draw his ſword.*

## SCENE X.

*Enter* ANNIUS.

*Ann.* Sextus, diſpatch——for Titus aſks——

*Sex.* I know it;
He aſks my blood, and it ſhall now be ſhed.
[*about to ſtab himſelf.*

*Ann.* Forbear——what mean'ſt thou? Titus aſks to ſee thee:
He wonders thou art abſent; why thou leav'ſt him
When danger threatens thus.

*Sex.* Ha! aſk to ſee me!
Say'ſt thou?—And died not Titus of his wound?

*Ann.* What wound? he's from the throng return'd in ſafety.

*Sex.* Thou doſt deceive me——I myſelf beheld him
Fall down transfix'd by an aſſaſſin's ſteel.

*Ann.* And where was this?

*Sex.* Within the narrow paſs
Aſcending the Tarpeian rock.

*Ann.* O! no;
Thou wert deluded; 'midſt the ſmoke and tumult
Some other ſeem'd like Titus.

*Sex.* How! another?
And who would dare to aſſume the robes of Cæſar,
The ſacred laurel, and the imperial mantle?

*Ann.* All argument is vain; for Titus lives,
And lives unhurt; ſince even this very inſtant
I parted from him.

*Sex.* O ye pitying Gods!
O my lov'd prince! permit me, deareſt friend,
Cloſe to thy breaſt—but doſt thou not deceive me?

*Ann.* Do I deſerve ſo little faith? But come,
Thou ſhalt thyſelf behold him.

*Sex.* Shall I then
Again preſume to ſtand in Titus' preſence?
What, I that have betray'd him?

*Ann.* Thou betray'd him!

*Sex.* Yes——I——the tumult firſt was caus'd by me.

*Ann.* Is Sextus then a traitor?

*Sex.* Yes, my friend!
One moment has undone me——O farewell!
I fly for ever from my native land:
Forget me not——defend the life of Titus

From

From every future ſnare——forlorn I go
To mourn in deſerts my unhappy crime.

*Ann.* Yet ſtay——ye powers!—let me reflect awhile:
Hear me——as yet the plot remains a ſecret;
And all to chance alone impute the flames.
Thy flight perhaps might ſpeak——

*Sex.* What would'ſt thou mean?

*Ann.* Thou muſt not now depart; conceal thy fault:
Return to Titus; expiate thy offence
By every future proof of loyalty.

*Sex.* Whoe'er he be, the wretch who wounded fell,
Perchance diſcover'd——

*Ann.* Thither let me haſte
To learn his name; if yet the truth be known,
If any ſpeak of thee; I ſhall have time
To tell thee all ere Cæſar will ſuſpect thee;
Then canſt thou fly. By ſtill remaining here
Thou may'ſt avoid that evil which thy flight
Would now but render ſure.

*Sex.* Alas! my friend:
I have no thought that can diſtinguiſh right:
I truſt myſelf to thee.——Muſt I then go?
I go, if thou approv'ſt it——but, O Heaven!
Titus will in my looks diſcern——

*Ann.* No more;

The

The leaſt delay may ruin thee.

*Sex.* I am gone: [*going.*

But then behold this mantle ſtain'd with blood.

*Ann.* Whence came this blood?

*Sex.* It iſſu'd from the wound
Of that unhappy wretch I mourn'd for Titus.

*Ann.* With care conceal it from the ſight——
diſpatch.

*Sex.* Chance may perhaps reveal——

*Ann.* Give me the mantle,
And take thou mine—Away—no more debate—
[*they change veſts.*
Soon will I join thee.

*Sex.* O I am loſt!——ſo deep
Is my diſtreſs, I know not if I ſpeak
The words of ſenſe, or incoherent madneſs!

Thus one, who ſtarts through troubled reſt,
With viſionary fears oppreſt,
Awhile confus'd and ſtupid lies,
Nor dares believe, nor doubt his eyes:
For even awake his thoughts purſue
The ſhapes his dream had brought to view;
While fancy ſtill dominion keeps,
He knows not if he wakes or ſleeps. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XI.

*A gallery adorned with ſtatues, adjoining to the gardens.*

TITUS, SERVILIA.

*Tit.* A plot againſt my life! how know'ſt thou this?

*Serv.* One of the faction has to me reveal'd
The whole deſign, and begg'd me to implore
Your pardon for him.

*Tit.* Lentulus a traitor?

*Serv.* Yes, Lentulus was author of the tumult,
In hopes to rob you of imperial greatneſs.
He led the aſſociates; he diſpoſed the ſignals;
He fir'd the Capitol to excite confuſion.
Already in your ſacred mantle veſted,
The traitor haſten'd to his ſide to gain
The troubled populace; but Heaven is juſt.
The robes he wore with purpoſe to betray you,
At once were your defence, and his deſtruction:
A wretch, among the number he ſeduc'd,
Who ſought your death, deceiv'd by his appearance,
Ruſh'd forth and plung'd his ſword in Lentulus.

*Tit.* And died he with the wound?

*Serv.* As yet I know not.

*Tit.*

*Tit.* How could the black confederacy remain
So long from me conceal'd?

*Serv.* Your very guards
Are tainted; treaſon there has found its way:
And that the traitors may each other know,
Thus Cæſar they're diſtinguiſh'd: each accomplice
On his left ſhoulder wears, to bind his robe,
A crimſon badge like this—obſerve—take heed.

*Tit.* Servilia, ſay, what think'ſt thou of dominion?
Who more could ſacrifice to other's good
Than I have done? Yet all ſuffices not
To gain the public love: there are who hate me,
Who ſeek to pluck the laurel from my brow,
The laurel dearly earn'd with toil and danger,
And theſe can find aſſociates even in Rome:
By Rome is Titus hated. Mighty Gods!
I, who have labour'd all my days for her;
Have for her greatneſs ſhed my deareſt blood;
Have borne in diſtant climes the parching heat
Of burning Nile, or Iſter's freezing cold!
I, who ne'er harbour'd in my mind a thought
But for her glory; 'midſt my own repoſe
Still watch'd her good; who, cruel to myſelf,
To pleaſe her rooted up my firſt affection,
And ſtifled in my breaſt the only flame
My heart could ever cheriſh!—O my country!
Forgetful ſubjects! O ungrateful Rome!

SCENE

## SCENE XII.

*Enter* SEXTUS.

*Sex.* [*entering.*] See there my ſovereign; how my conſcious heart
Pants in his preſence! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Sextus, deareſt Sextus,
Come near, I am betray'd.

*Sex.* Accurs'd remembrance! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Would'ſt thou believe it, friend? Thy Titus now
Is hateful grown to Rome! ah! thou who know'ſt
My every thought; thou, who haſt ſeen my heart
Without diſguiſe, thou who wert ever ſtill
The object of my love; declare, my Sextus,
How I could merit ſuch unkind return.

*Sex.* He knows not how he ſtabs me to the ſoul. [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Tell me by which of all my deeds I've drawn
This hatred on me.

*Sex.* Sir———

*Tit.* Speak, ſpeak, my friend.

*Sex.* O ſir!——I cannot ſpeak——

*Tit.* Thou weep'ſt, my Sextus.
Alas! my deſtiny excites thy pity!

Come

Come to my boſom :——how my ſoul is eas'd
Amidſt her pains ! how am I charm'd to ſee
Theſe tender proofs of thy untainted faith !

*Sex.* I cannot bear it—I can hold no longer—
Methinks by ſilence I again betray him ;
I muſt diſcover all———

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* VITELLIA.

*Vitel.* [*entering.*] Ha ! Sextus here !
Grant Heaven that he betray me not ! [*aſide.*

*Sex.* This inſtant
I'll fall before his feet— [*going towards* Titus.

*Vitel.* Victorious Cæſar,
The mighty Gods preſerve thee. [*interpoſing.*

*Sex.* How ! Vitellia ?
There wanted only this to crown my miſery.
[*aſide.*

*Vitel.* Still, ſtill I tremble at thy danger paſt—
[*to* Titus.
For pity ſpeak not. [*to* Sextus *aſide.*

*Sex.* This indeed is torture ! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Princeſs ! to loſe my life, to loſe my empire,
Would not afflict me : theſe are only mine,
As theſe conduce to work the good of others :

He merits not his birth who thinks his life
Given for himſelf alone: but if my blood
Can profit aught to Rome, yet wherefore thus
Employs ſhe treaſon? Have I e'er refus'd
To ſhed it for her? Knows ſhe not, ingrate,
That I'm a Roman, that I'm Titus ſtill?
Why ſhould ſhe ſeek by dark aſſaſſins' hands
That life which for her ſake I freely offer?

*Serv.* O glorious hero!

## SCENE XIV.

*Enter* ANNIUS *with the mantle of* SEXTUS.

*Ann.* Could I but relate
To Sextus what I've learn'd, diſcloſe his danger—
[*aſide.*
My lord, already are the flames extinguiſh'd;
But theſe were not the work of chance—take heed,
For ſome there are who plot againſt your life.
[*to* Titus.

*Tit.* Annius, I know it well——but, look, Servilia!
What do I ſee? Is not the fatal ſign,
That marks the traitor, on the veſt of Annius?

*Serv.* Eternal powers!

*Tit.* There is no room for doubt;
The faſhion, colour, every thing concurs.

*Serv.* Ah! traitor!

*Ann.* I a traitor!

*Sex.* What has chanc'd? [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Would'ſt thou too, Annius, ſhed thy prince's blood?
And why, my ſon? How have I injur'd thee?

*Ann.* I ſhed thy blood!——ah! firſt let angry Heaven
Transfix me with its thunder!

*Tit.* 'Tis in vain
Thou ſhunn'ſt detection, while that crimſon witneſs,
The rebel's dire diſtinction, points thee out
A black accomplice in the cauſe of treaſon.

*Ann.* What means my fate? [*aſide.*

*Sex.* Alas! what have I done!
I read it now too plain. [*aſide.*

*Ann.* My lord, I know not
Of any ſuch diſtinction: all the Gods
I call to witneſs.

*Tit.* Tell me then from whom
Thou hadſt this veſt.

*Ann.* I had——if I declare
The truth, I muſt accuſe my friend. [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Go on.

*Ann.* I had it then from—Oh!——

*Tit.* His guilt confounds him.

*Sex.* O friendſhip! [*aſide.*

*Vitel.* O my terror! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Where, my Sextus,
Where wilt thou find than me a prince more wretched?
All others, by the favours they confer,
At leaſt can purchaſe friends; while I alone,
By heaping favours, make my friends my foes.

*Ann.* What ſhall I ſay to clear me? [*aſide.*

*Sex.* Never, never,
Muſt innocence be loſt for me——Vitellia,
Thou ſee'ſt I am compell'd. [*aſide to* Vitellia.

*Vitel.* Ah! hold—what doſt thou?
Think of my danger. [*to* Sextus.

*Sex.* O diſtracting ſtate! [*aſide.*

*Ann.* Eternal powers! aſſiſt me.

*Tit.* Now, Servilia,
Think'ſt thou that ſuch a lover could deſerve
So vaſt a price?

*Serv.* I bluſh, and feel remorſe
That e'er I lov'd.

*Sex.* Unhappy friend! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* But ſay,
Ungrateful man! could not the thought alone
Of ſuch dire treaſon chill thy ſoul with horror?

*Sex.* That moſt ungrateful wretch am I. [*aſide.*

*Tit.* But how

Sprung

Sprung in thy breaſt a fury ſo unjuſt?

*Sex.* I can no longer hold——[*aſide.*] See, mighty Cæſar,
Here at your feet—— [*to* Titus *kneeling.*

*Vitel.* Unhappy me!

*Sex.* The crime
Which Annius ſtands accuſed of——

*Vitel.* [*interpoſing.*] Yes, his crime
Is great, but greater ſtill is Cæſar's mercy.
Sextus for him, my lord, implores your pardon,
And I implore it too.——Seek'ſt thou my death?
[*to* Sextus *aſide.*

*Sex.* How dreadful is my fate! [*riſes.*

*Tit.* At leaſt let Annius
Plead ſomething in excuſe.

*Ann.* Fain would I ſpeak—
But, O! what can I ſay! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Sextus, my ſoul
Is mov'd with ſympathy. I ſee my preſence
Confounds him more. Guards, take him to your care.
The Senate's juſtice ſoon ſhall try the offence
Of this—I will not yet pronounce thee traitor.
Reflect, ingrate, and let it wound thy thoughts,
How different is thy prince's heart from thine.

Thy

Thy black deſigns too plain appear,
No veil can hide thy guilt and ſhame;
And yet to do thee wrong I fear,
In giving thee a traitor's name.

To friendſhip's treacherous maſk you fly,
Againſt your ſovereign to conſpire;
While, pitying your confuſion, I
To hide him from your ſight retire. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XV.

SEXTUS, ANNIUS, VITELLIA, SERVILIA, *Guards.*

*Ann.* And thou, my deareſt conſort——
[*to* Servilia.

*Serv.* Hence! be gone!
Thy conſort I'm no longer. [*going.*

*Ann.* Stay and hear me.

*Serv.* Unmark'd by me each accent flies,
By treacherous lips expreſt;
And every paſſion I deſpiſe,
That warms a traitor's breaſt.

Thy bonds by me ſhall ne'er be worn,
Deteſted may they prove!
The nuptials, and the ſpouſe I ſcorn,
The lover and the love. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XVI.

SEXTUS, ANNIUS, VITELLIA, *Guards.*

*Ann.* And ſpeaks not Sextus yet? [*aſide.*

*Sex.* Methinks I feel
The ſtroke of death! [*aſide.*

*Vitel.* I tremble! [*aſide.*

*Ann.* Sextus, now
Behold me at the laſt extremity,
Without an advocate to plead my cauſe.
I need not tell thee what reproach I hear
From every tongue, or what this breaſt conceals.
This is too much—think what thy friend endures.

Though like a rebel I depart,
That ſtill I'm faithful thou canſt tell:
I've ever kept thee near my heart,
Let me in thy remembrance dwell.

My chains without complaint I wear;
But all reſolves too feeble prove,
A traitor's name unmov'd to bear,
To bear the hate of her I love. [*Exit guarded.*

SCENE

## SCENE XVII.

SEXTUS, VITELLIA.

*Sex.* At length I may, inhuman——

*Vitel.* Yet forbear,
Let us not waſte the time in vain complaints:
Fly, Sextus, and preſerve thy life and mine.

*Sex.* Ha! ſhall I fly and leave a guiltleſs friend?

*Vitel.* Myſelf will watch the ſafety of thy friend.

*Sex.* No, while my Annius ſtill remains in danger——

*Vitel.* I ſwear by all the Gods I will defend him.

*Sex.* But what avails to thee my flight?

*Vitel.* By this
My honour and thy life are ſafe—thou art loſt
If aught betray thee; and with thy diſcovery
My ſecret guilt is known.

*Sex.* Within this breaſt
It buried lies, and none ſhall wreſt it from me:
In death I will preſerve it.

*Vitel.* I might truſt thee,
But that I ſee thy tender love for Titus.
His wrath I dread not; but his clemency
I fear may vanquiſh thee—by thoſe dear moments
In which I pleas'd thee firſt; by all the hopes

Thou e'er haſt cheriſh'd, fly; remove my terrors:
Much haſt thou done already; O! complete
The generous work: this is the greateſt, laſt
Requeſt thy love can grant: thou wilt at once
Reſtore my peace and honour.—Sextus—ſpeak,
Determine.

*Sex.* Heavenly pow'rs!

*Vitel.* Yes, yes, I ſee
Compaſſion for me pleading in thy looks:
I know th' emotions of thy tender heart:
Tell me——am I deceiv'd? And do I hope
Too much from thy indulgence? Speak, my Sextus.

*Sex.* Yes; thou haſt conquer'd; I will fly—what power
Enchants me thus?

*Vitel.* I am compos'd again.

*Sex.* But when from thee I ſhall be far remov'd,
At leaſt——

## SCENE XVIII.

*Enter* PUBLIUS *and Guards.*

*Pub.* Sextus.

*Sex.* What would'ſt thou?

*Pub.* Yield thy ſword.

*Sex.* Ha! wherefore, ſay?

*Pub.*

*Pub.* For thy misfortune, learn
That Lentulus yet lives; conceive the reſt:
Away.

*Vitel.* O fatal blow! [*aſide.*

*Sex.* At length, inhuman———

[*gives his ſword.*

*Pub.* Sextus, we muſt be gone; the Senate now
Are met to hear thee; and I dare no longer
Delay thy preſence there.

*Sex.* Ingrate, farewell!

If e'er thou feel'ſt ſoft zephyrs riſe,
Whoſe gentle breath around thee flies,
O ſay, "Theſe are the parting ſighs
"Of him who died for me."
My ſpirit freed from mortal chains,
Shall pleas'd review its former pains
Rewarded thus by thee.

[*Exit with* Publius *and guards.*

## SCENE XIX.

VITELLIA *alone.*

Ah! whither ſhall I turn me now? Behold
Ill-fated Sextus dies, and dies for me!
By Titus ſoon my guilt will be diſcover'd,
And all with him will witneſs to my ſhame.
O no!

O no! I dare not ſpeak, or fly, or ſtay;
I have no hopes of aid, no friend to counſel:
I can ſee nothing but impending ruin;
And nothing feel but terror and remorſe.

What dreadful doubts my ſoul diſmay!
I tremble at the beams of day;
At every whiſpering gale I hear,
My boſom pants with anxious fear.
Fain would I hide myſelf from ſight;
Fain would I bring my crime to light;
Yet have not courage to reveal
My thoughts, nor courage to conceal. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

## ACT III. SCENE I.

*A private apartment; chair and table, with pens, ink and paper.*

TITUS, PUBLIUS.

*Pub.* My lord, already haſtens on the hour
Fix'd for the public games: you know that cuſtom
Requires the obſervance of the ſolemn day.
The populace, in ſwarming numbers, crowd
The joyful theatre; and nothing more
Is wanting but your preſence. Every one
Pants to behold you from the recent treaſon
Preſerv'd in ſafety: then delay no longer
This ſatisfaction to your faithful Rome.

*Tit.* Publius, this inſtant we'll depart; but yet
I ſhall not reſt till we receive the news
Of Sextus' fate. The Senate muſt ere this
Have heard the charge diſprov'd; muſt have diſcover'd
(For thou ſhalt find it ſo) his innocence:
The tidings ſoon will reach us.

*Pub.* Lentulus
Confeſs'd, alas! too clearly.

*Tit.* Lentulus,
Perhaps, but ſeeks a partner in his guilt,

To

To ſhare with him his pardon. Well he knows
How dear is Sextus to me. Theſe are arts
Familiar to the wicked.——From the Senate
None yet appears——What can this mean? Go, Publius,
Aſk wherefore this delay: I would know all
Ere I depart.

*Pub.* I go: but much I fear
I ſhall return the meſſenger of ill.

*Tit.* Believ'ſt thou then that Sextus can be falſe?
I judge his ſoul from mine; it cannot be
He ever ſhould betray me.

*Pub.* Yet, my lord,
Remember all have not the ſoul of Titus.

How ſlowly does his generous heart
Another's crime believe,
Who ne'er himſelf with treacherous art,
Another could deceive!

No wonder he, whoſe honour tried,
From truth could ne'er deſcend,
Should think no treaſon could reſide
Beneath the name of friend. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE II.

TITUS *alone.*

No, Sextus, no: I never will believe
Thou canſt be ſuch a traitor. I have ſeen
Not only proofs of truth and friendſhip from thee,
I've even beheld thee melt with tenderneſs
At Titus' fortune.——Is it poſſible
A mind ſo far ſhould change?——

## SCENE III.

*Enter* ANNIUS.

*Tit.* Annius, what news?
Speak; does not Sextus' innocence appear
Clear as thy own? What ſay'ſt thou? Give me comfort.

*Ann.* O ſir! I come to implore your mercy for him.

*Tit.* My mercy! is he guilty then?

*Ann.* That mantle
Which made me ſeem a traitor in your ſight,
He gave to me: by him the fatal badge
Too well was known. Even now before the Senate
Has Lentulus declar'd himſelf by Sextus
Seduc'd to the revolt; while to the charge

The

The accus'd made no reply. What would we more?
What further hopes remain?

*Tit.* Yes, yes, my friend,
Still let us hope the beſt, for to the wretched
Misfortune oft is guilt; nor always that
Is truth which wears her form: this haſt thou found.
Thou cam'ſt before me with a rebel's badge;
Thou wert by all accus'd; I queſtion'd thee,
Thou mad'ſt no anſwer, but didſt ſeem perplex'd,
Loſt in thy guilt. Did not thy fault appear
Then manifeſt?—Appearance yet deceiv'd us.
Who knows but chance, unhappily for Sextus,
May once again unite ſuch ſeeming proofs?

*Ann.* Heaven grant it ſo——but ſhould he yet be guilty—

*Tit.* Should he be guilty after all my marks
Of friendſhip, ſhould I find his heart could ever
Conſent to harbour ſuch ingratitude;
I too like him might then forget——but no—
It cannot be——ſtill, ſtill my hopes remain.

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* PUBLIUS *with a paper.*

*Pub.* O Cæſar! ſaid I not the event would prove it?
Sextus is author of the black deſign.

*Tit.*

*Tit.* Publius!——Can this be true?

*Pub.* Alas! too true;
Himſelf confeſs'd it all. With his aſſociates
The Senate have condemn'd him to be caſt
A prey to hungry beaſts amid the Circus.
Lo! here the ſentence, terrible yet juſt,
Which only wants, great ſir, the name of Cæſar.
[*giving the paper.*

*Tit.* Almighty powers!
[*throws himſelf into his chair.*

*Ann.* Moſt merciful of princes! [*kneels.*

*Tit.* Annius, forbear awhile—moleſt me not—
[Annius *riſes.*

*Pub.* My lord, already for the ſolemn pomp
The populace conven'd——

*Tit.* I know it—leave me. [Publius *retires.*

*Ann.* O prince! thy godlike grace beſtow,
Though rigour ſure is juſtice now;
Yet thou wilt ne'er with rigorous hand,
Exact whate'er our faults demand.
Though crimes like his ſhould ne'er obtain,
Nor prayers, like mine, thy pity gain;
Yet for thy mercy's ſake forgive;
For Titus' ſake let Sextus live! [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE V.

TITUS *alone.*

What dreadful treachery! unexampled falſehood!
To ſeem my friend, to be for ever near me,
And every moment from my heart to draw
Freſh proofs of my affection; yet even then
To plot againſt my life!—and do I ſtill
Suſpend his puniſhment? ſtill doubt to ſign
The rightful ſentence?—Yes, the traitor dies—
[*takes the pen to write, then ſtops.*
His doom is fix'd—and ſhall I then unheard
Send Sextus to his death?—Yet why defer it?
Have not the Senate given him ample hearing?
But what if he ſhould have ſome ſecret myſtery
To impart to me alone—Who waits there?
[*lays down the pen, a guard enters.*
Yes:
Firſt let me hear, then to his fate diſmiſs him.
Let Sextus be conducted to my preſence.
[*guard goes out.*
How wretched is the lot of him who reigns!
We're ſtill denied the benefits of life
The meaneſt men enjoy. Amidſt the woods
See the poor cottager, whoſe ruſtic limbs
Are clad in rude attire, whoſe ſtraw-built hut
But ill reſiſts the inclemencies of Heaven,

Sleeps undiſturb'd the live-long night, and leads
His days in quiet; little are his wants;
He knows who love or hate him; to the foreſt
Or diſtant hills, alone, accompanied,
Fearleſs he goes, and ſees each honeſt heart
In every face he meets——But we, midſt all
Our envied pomp, muſt ever live in doubt;
While hope and fear before our preſence ſtill
Dreſs up the features foreign to the heart.
O could I once have thought to feel this ſtroke
From faithleſs friendſhip!

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* PUBLIUS.

*Tit.* Publius, where is Sextus?
Comes he not yet?

*Pub.* The guards are gone with ſpeed
To execute your orders.

*Tit.* What can mean
This long delay?

*Pub.* They but even now, my lord,
Went from your preſence.

*Tit.* Go, and bid them haſte.

*Pub.* I ſhall obey—but ſee the advancing Lictors;
And Sextus cannot now be far—he's here.

*Tit.* Ungrateful man!—yet at his near approach

Already I perceive my former friendſhip
Plead in his cauſe——but no——it muſt not be;
Here let him meet his ſovereign, not his friend.
[Titus *ſeats himſelf, and aſſumes an air of majeſty.*

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* Sextus *guarded.*

*Sex.* [*entering.*] Almighty Gods! are thoſe the looks of Titus?
Alas! I find no more their wonted ſweetneſs!
How dreadful to me is he now become! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* O Heaven! is that like Sextus? Has his guilt
Transform'd him thus? He carries in his face
The blended marks of fear, remorſe and ſhame!
[*aſide.*

*Pub.* Behold a thouſand paſſions now contend!
[*aſide.*

*Tit.* Come near. [*ſternly.*

*Sex.* O well known voice! whoſe accents ſtrike
My ſhuddering heart! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Doſt thou not hear? [*ſternly.*

*Sex.* O Gods!
My feet begin to fail; a chilly ſweat
Bedews my face; the agony of death
Cannot be more than this!
[*advances ſlowly towards* Titus, *then ſtops.*

*Tit.* The traitor trembles. [*aſide.*

*Pub.* I know not which of theſe now ſuffers moſt,
Sextus, reflecting on his crime committed,
Or Titus, thus conſtrain'd to puniſh it. [*aſide.*

*Tit.* And yet he moves my pity—[*aſide.*]—— Publius, guards,
Leave us alone. [Publius *and guards retire.*

*Sex.* O no! my conſtancy [*aſide.*
Can ne'er ſupport the terrors of that face.

## SCENE VIII.

TITUS, SEXTUS.

[Titus *left alone with* Sextus, *lays aſide his air of majeſty.*

*Tit.* Ah! Sextus, is it true? And doſt thou then
Deſire my death? How has thy prince, thy father,
Thy benefactor drawn thy hatred on him?
What if thou could'ſt eraſe from thy remembrance
Titus thy ſovereign, how could'ſt thou forget
Titus thy friend? Is this the recompenſe
Of all my tenderneſs and care for thee?
Whom, whom, ye Gods! can I hereafter truſt,
Since Sextus has betray'd me? Is it poſſible?
And did thy heart conſent to my deſtruction?

*Sex.*

*Sex.* O Titus! O my gracious prince!——no more— [*burſting into tears, and throwing himſelf at the feet of* Titus.
No more.—Could you but view this wretched heart,
Tho' perjur'd and ingrate, 'twould move your pity.
All, all my crimes now ſtand before my ſight,
And all your bounties crowd upon my mind.
I cannot bear reflection on myſelf;
I cannot bear thoſe looks; to view that face
I tremble; ſhudder but to hear your voice;
And even your clemency becomes my torment!
O haſten then my death! take, quickly take
This faithleſs life: would you be merciful,
Here let me, grovelling at your ſacred feet,
Pour forth my treacherous blood.

*Tit.* Riſe, thou unhappy! [Sextus *riſes.*
I ſcarce can bear to hear his deep remorſe. [*aſide.*
Thou ſee'ſt to what a wretched ſtate one crime
Can ſink the ſoul, a wild deſire of empire.
What didſt thou hope to find upon the throne?
The ſum of all content?—Unthinking man!
Behold the fruits that I have gather'd from it,
And, if thou canſt, deſire it ſtill.

*Sex.* O no!
Ambition ne'er ſeduc'd me.

*Tit.* Tell me then,
What was the cauſe?

*Sex.* My weakneſs and my fate.—

*Tit.*

*Tit.* Explain thyſelf more fully.

*Sex.* Heavens! I cannot!

*Tit.* Obſerve me, Sextus; we are now alone;
Thy ſovereign is not preſent: open then
Thy heart to Titus; truſt it with thy friend.
I promiſe thee Auguſtus ne'er ſhall know
The ſecret thou diſcloſeſt: tell me how
Thy faith was firſt ſeduc'd: let us together
Seek ſome pretence to excuſe thee. I perchance
Shall be even happier than thyſelf to find it.

*Sex.* Alas! my guilt admits of no defence.

*Tit.* At leaſt I aſk it in exchange of friendſhip.
I ne'er conceal'd my deepeſt thoughts from thee;
And ſure I merit Sextus ſhould intruſt
One ſecret with me.

*Sex.* What new kind of torture
Muſt I endure, either to anger Titus,
Or to accuſe Vitellia! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Still in doubt?
Thou ſtrik'ſt me, Sextus, in the tendereſt part.
Conſider that this diffidence becomes
Injurious to our friendſhip: think again,
And grant my juſt requeſt.

*Sex.* What fatal ſtar
Shone at my luckleſs birth! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Still art thou ſilent?
Wilt thou not anſwer me? Since then thou canſt

So

So far abuſe my mercy——

*Sex.* Sacred ſir,
Hear then—but whither would I now? [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Go on.

*Sex.* When will my torture ceaſe!

*Tit.* Yet ſpeak again,
What is it thou would'ſt ſay?

*Sex.* That I'm the object
Of heavenly wrath, that I've no longer power
To bear my fate; that I confeſs myſelf
The worſt of traitors, call myſelf ungrateful,
Own that I merit death, and wiſh to find it.

*Tit.* And thou ſhalt have thy wiſh——[*riſes.*]
Guards! from our preſence
Remove the priſoner. [*guards return.*

*Sex.* On that awful hand
One farewell kiſs——

*Tit.* Away—— [*turning from him.*

*Sex.* This is the laſt
Requeſt I'll make: O ſir! but for this inſtant
Recall your former love to mind—

*Tit.* Away,
'Tis now too late?

*Sex.* It is——it is indeed.

Deſpairing from your ſight I fly,
Grim death I view approaching nigh,
But view without diſmay.
Remembrance ſharpens every dart,
To think that e'er my faithleſs heart
Could thus my prince betray.
[*Exit guarded.*

## SCENE IX.

TITUS *alone.*

When was there ever heard ſuch ſtubborn treaſon!
Could even the tendereſt father treat more gently
A guilty ſon? Yes, for my grace contemn'd,
Though innocent of every other crime,
He merits not to live: I owe revenge
To my deſpis'd, neglected clemency.
[*goes towards the table, then ſtops.*
Revenge!—ah! Titus, wilt thou then deſcend
So low, to harbour ſuch a baſe deſire,
That makes the offended, and the offender equal?
What mighty praiſe is his who uſes power
For his revenge? To take another's life
Is what the meaneſt of mankind can boaſt;
To give it is the glorious privilege
Of Gods and kings alone.—Then let him live—
And ſhall the laws in vain decide? Shall I,

Their

Their guardian, thus enforce them? Cannot Titus
Forget his friend in Sextus? Did not Brutus
And Manlius once forget the name of father?
O! let me now purſue thoſe great examples.
Henceforth the thoughts of friendſhip and of mercy
Be blotted from my breaſt—[*ſits.*]——Sextus is guilty;
Sextus ſhall die—[*ſigns the paper.*]—Behold at length I tread
The paths of rigour; ſee me ſtain'd with blood,
[*riſes.*
Blood of my fellow-citizen: my friend
Is ſingled firſt to bear the dreadful ſentence.
How will poſterity receive this deed?
Will they not ſay that clemency in Titus
Is wearied out, as cruelty was once
In Scylla and Auguſtus? They may ſay
I've been too rigid; that his birth, his youth
Might have excus'd him; that the firſt offence
Should not be puniſh'd; that the ſkilful ſwain
Lops not with thoughtleſs haſte ſome branch unſound,
Till all his art has prov'd in vain to ſave it.
They'll ſay, perhaps, that Titus was the offended,
And might, without a breach of public juſtice,
Have pardon'd crimes contriv'd againſt himſelf.
Then ſhall I do my heart ſuch violence,
Yet reſt uncertain of the world's approval?
No, let me not forſake the wonted path

My

My nature ſhows—though faithleſs yet my friend
Shall live—[*tears the paper.*]—and if I muſt endure the tongue
Of public cenſure, let me be condemn'd
For mercy, not for rigour.—Publius.—
[*throws down the paper.*

## SCENE X.

*Enter* PUBLIUS.

*Pub.* Cæſar.

*Tit.* Let us be gone—the populace expect us.

*Pub.* And what of Sextus, ſir?

*Tit.* Be Sextus likewiſe
Conducted to the Circus.

*Pub.* Then his fate—

*Tit.* Yes, Publius, 'tis determin'd.

*Pub.* Wretched Sextus! [*aſide.*

*Tit.* Ye friendly powers! if ſovereign ſway
Demand a heart ſevere,
Take, take this envied ſtate away,
Or change the mind I bear.

If love cannot with gentle ties
My ſubjects' faith enſure,
The allegiance never ſhall I prize,
Which puniſhments ſecure. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XI.

PUBLIUS, VITELLIA.

*Vitel.* Hear, Publius.——

*Pub.* Pardon me, for I muſt now
Attend on Cæſar. [*going.*

*Vitel.* Whither?

*Pub.* To the Circus.

*Vitel.* And what of Sextus?

*Pub.* Sextus will be there.

*Vitel.* Then muſt he die?

*Pub.* Too true he muſt.

*Vitel.* Ah me! [*aſide.*
Did Sextus ſpeak with Titus?

*Pub.* Yes; they long
Convers'd together.

*Vitel.* Know'ſt thou then what paſs'd?

*Pub.* No; they were left alone by Cæſar's order;
I was withdrawn apart. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XII.

VITELLIA *alone.*

I can no longer
Nouriſh fallacious hopes; it muſt be ſo:
Already Sextus has diſcover'd me;
I read it plainly in the looks of Publius:
I ne'er before perceiv'd him thus; he ſhuns me;
Fears to be with me long—O! would to Heaven
I had obey'd the impulſe of my heart!
I ſhould in time to Titus have diſclos'd
My ſecret thoughts, and laid my crime before him:
For oft the penitent, that owns his fault,
Takes half the guilt away——'tis now too late;
Cæſar has heard it all, but not from me;
This muſt incenſe him further.

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* ANNIUS *and* SERVILIA *from different ſides.*

*Serv.* Ah! Vitellia!

*Ann.* Ah! princeſs!

*Serv.* My unhappy brother——now——

*Ann.* My deareſt friend———

*Serv.* Is led to death.

*Ann.*

*Ann.* Erelong,
All Rome ſpectators, muſt he be the prey
Of ſavage beaſts.

*Vitel.* What power's in me to help him?

*Serv.* Cæſar will grant his life to your entreaties.

*Ann.* To his new empreſs nothing he'll refuſe.

*Vitel.* Annius, I am not empreſs yet——

*Ann.* Before
Yon' ſun ſalutes the weſt, Titus will join
His hand with yours: this inſtant, in my preſence
He gave directions for the nuptial pomp.

*Vitel.* Sextus has then conceal'd my ſecret ſtill;
O unexampled proof of faith and love! [*aſide.*
Annius, Servilia, let us haſte——but whither
Unthinking would I go?——Depart, my friends,
And I will follow.

*Ann.* But ſhould Sextus truſt
To late aſſiſtance, Sextus then is loſt! [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIV.

VITELLIA, SERVILIA.

*Vitel.* Go thou, Servilia, too——for one ſhort moment
I would be left alone.

*Serv.* Ah! let him not
Thus periſh in his early bloom of life:

Thou know'ſt till now that he was ever held
The darling hope of Rome; and who can tell
By whom he was ſeduc'd? In thee compaſſion
Would be but gratitude: this hapleſs man
Priz'd thee far dearer than himſelf: thy name
Was ever on his lips; and from his cheek
The colour fled when he diſcours'd of thee.
Thou weep'ſt———

*Vitel.* Ah! go——

*Serv.* But why wilt thou remain?
Methinks, Vitellia———

*Vitel.* O ye powers! depart——
I'll come this inſtant—hence—diſtract me not.

*Serv.* If only pity you beſtow,
My brother to defend:
In vain is all the grief you ſhow,
In vain your tears deſcend.

Why theſe gentle paſſions cheriſh?
Give your fruitleſs pity o'er:
When you leave him thus to periſh,
What could cruelty do more? [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XV.

VITELLIA *alone.*

Now, now, Vitellia, is the time to prove
Thy utmoſt conſtancy: canſt thou reſolve
To ſee thy faithful Sextus pale and breathleſs?
Sextus, who loves thee dearer than his life;
Who, by thy fault, to obey thy cruel will,
Incurr'd the guilt of treaſon; who adores thee,
Inhuman as thou art! who even in death
Preſerves to thee his faith inviolate?
Shalt thou, meanwhile, though conſcious of thy crime,
Without remorſe aſcend the bed of Cæſar?
O! I ſhould ſee for ever Sextus near me;
Should tremble leſt the earth and air might whiſper
My guilt to Titus! Let me fly this inſtant,
And proſtrate at his feet diſcover all.
If Sextus cannot wholly ſtand abſolv'd,
At leaſt I may extenuate his offence.
Farewell the hopes of empire and of nuptials!
Such thoughts were madneſs now—let but my breaſt
Be freed for ever from theſe racking pangs,
And all my hopes I ſcatter to the winds.

The ſailor, when the tempeſt raves,
Caſts in the ſea his precious ſtores;
Which through a mighty tract of waves,
His veſſel brought from foreign ſhores.

Returning to his native land,
His thanks he to the Gods repays,
That once again the wiſh'd-for ſtrand,
Though poor, in ſafety he ſurveys. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVI.

*A magnificent entrance to a ſpacious amphitheatre, the inſide of which is diſcovered through the ſeveral arches that ſupport it. In the midſt of the circus are ſeen the conſpirators condemned to the wild beaſts.*

*While the following Chorus is ſung,* TITUS *comes out, preceded by the Lictors, ſurrounded by the Senators and Patricians, and followed by the Prætors: then* ANNIUS *and* SERVILIA *from different ſides.*

CHORUS.

'Tis now, exalted hero! known
That Titus to the Gods is dear;
This ſingle day's events have ſhown,
That you the Gods' protection ſhare.

Hail

Hail, happy Cæſar! virtue muſt
In Heaven for ever find a friend;
And thoſe, who like themſelves are juſt,
The righteous Gods will thus defend.

*Tit.* Ere yet the games begin, before our preſence,
Guards, bring the criminal.—His hopes of pardon
Are now extinct; thus what he leaſt expects,
Will come with double welcome. [*aſide.*

*Ann.* Cæſar, mercy!

*Serv.* Mercy, O ſacred ſir!

*Tit.* If now you ſue
For Sextus, 'tis too late——his doom is fix'd.

*Ann.* And can you then, with looks ſerene, condemn
Sextus to death?

*Serv.* How has the heart of Titus
Forgot its wonted goodneſs!

*Tit.* Peace——he comes.

*Serv.* O Sextus!

*Ann.* O my friend!

## SCENE XVII.

*Enter* PUBLIUS *and* SEXTUS *conducted by the Lictors.*

*Tit.* Sextus, thou know'ſt
The nature of thy crimes: nor need I tell thee
What puniſhment awaits them. Rome o'erturn'd,
Inſulted majeſty, the laws infring'd,
Friendſhip betray'd, offended Heaven and earth
Require thy death——thou know'ſt my life alone
Thy treaſon aim'd at——mark me now——

## SCENE LAST.

*Enter* VITELLIA.

*Vitel.* Behold
Moſt mighty Cæſar, proſtrate at your feet,
[*throwing herſelf at the feet of* Titus.
The moſt diſtreſs'd——

*Tit.* Ah! riſe—what doſt thou mean?
What is it thou would'ſt ſay?

*Vitel.* I bring before thee
The author of this foul deſign.

*Tit.* Where is he
That could contrive ſuch ſnares againſt my life?

*Vitel.* Thou'lt not believe it.

*Tit.*

*Tit.* Wherefore?

*Vitel.* I——am guilty.

*Tit.* Thou too, Vitellia!

*Sex.* *Serv.* O ye powers!

*Ann.* *Pub.* O Heavens!

*Tit.* Which of ye more have plotted to betray me?

*Vitel.* I am the guiltieſt—I contriv'd the treaſon;
I from his faith ſeduc'd your deareſt friend,
And urg'd him, blinded by my wiles, to attempt
Your ſacred life.

*Tit.* What caus'd thy rage againſt me?

*Vitel.* Your goodneſs, which I conſtru'd into love.
Vain hopes I nouriſh'd to receive from you
Your hand in marriage, and to ſhare the throne:
But ſince, neglected twice, I ſought revenge.

*Tit.* What dreadful day is this! even at the inſtant
I ſtand prepar'd to pardon one offender,
Another is diſcover'd: righteous powers!
Where ſhall I find a faithful friend? The ſtars
Have ſurely all conſpir'd to make me cruel,
Spite of my nature.—No—they ſhall not boaſt

Such triumph o'er me: ſtill my conſtant mind
Shall hold her wonted tenour. Let us prove
Which can be moſt unſhaken, treachery
In other breaſts, or clemency in mine.
Guards, ſtrike off Sextus' chains; give Lentulus
And his companions life and liberty.
Be witneſs Rome that I am ſtill the ſame;
That Titus knows, forgets, and pardons all.

*Ann.* } O generous prince!
*Pub.* }

*Serv.* What virtue e'er before
Attain'd ſuch godlike height!

*Sex.* I'm motionleſs.

*Vitel.* I cannot hold from tears.

*Tit.* To thee, Vitellia,
This hand I promis d——but——

*Vitel.* I know it, Cæſar,
'Tis not for me, for after guilt like mine,
Such union would be monſtrous.

*Tit.* Yet, in part,
I'll anſwer thy deſire: I plight my word
Thou ne'er ſhalt ſee a rival on the throne.
I'll have no other conſort now than Rome;
No children but my ſubjects: my affections
Shall undivided center all in them.
Thou, princeſs, to the approaching happy nuptials
Of Annius and Servilia add thy own:

To

To Sextus give thy hand; the wiſh'd-for grant
His love has dearly purchas'd.

*Vitel.* While I live
Your will ſhall ever dictate to my heart.

*Sex.* O Cæſar! O my lord! and will you yet
Refuſe our adoration? Shall not Tyber
Raiſe temples to your name? How can I hope
The bitter memory of my paſt offences——

*Tit.* Sextus, enough; let us once more be friends,
And never ſpeak again of errors paſt;
For theſe already in the breaſt of Titus
Are cancell'd all: I blot them from my thoughts;
And while I thus embrace, I pardon thee.

[*embraces* Sextus.

CHORUS.

'Tis now, exalted hero! known
That Titus to the Gods is dear;
This ſingle day's events have ſhown,
That you the Gods' protection ſhare.

Hail, happy Cæſar! virtue muſt
In Heaven for ever find a friend;
And thoſe, who like themſelves are juſt,
The righteous Gods will thus defend.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

DEMETRIUS.

# DEMETRIUS.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CLEONICE, Queen of SYRIA, in love with ALCESTES.

ALCESTES, in love with CLEONICE.

PHENICIUS, a Grandee of the Kingdom, Tutor to ALCESTES, and Father of OLINTHUS.

OLINTHUS, a Grandee of the Kingdom, rival to ALCESTES.

BARSENE, the Confidante of CLEONICE, ſecretly in love with ALCESTES.

MITHRANES, Captain of the Royal Guards, Friend to PHENICIUS.

The SCENE lies in SELEUCIA.

# DEMETRIUS.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*An apartment illuminated: a ſeat; a table on one ſide and a ſceptre and crown upon it.*

CLEONICE *ſeated, leaning upon the table,* OLINTHUS.

*Cleo.* Enough, Olinthus, in a few ſhort moments
The impatient people at the deſtin'd place
Shall ſee their queen: they aſk of me to chooſe
A huſband and a king——yes, I will chooſe
A king and huſband: give me but an inſtant
To recollect my thoughts. Why am I preſs'd
With ſuch unmanner'd zeal? Have then my vaſſals
No more reſpect? And was it but to enſlave,
You rais'd me to the throne? Or do you ſcorn
To yield ſubjection to a female ſway?
But Cleonice is not yet the firſt
Example of her ſex; Scythia has own'd
The rule of Thomyris and of Thaleſtris;
And Babylon and Carthage have confeſs'd
The reigns of Dido and Semiramis.

*Olin.*

*Olin.* Forgive me, queen, unjuſtly you complain:
Say, has not Syria witneſs'd to your virtues?
Remember, when your mighty father died,
She plac'd you on the throne; to you intruſted
Th' election of her king; allow'd you time
For counſel and reflection: ever ſince
She ſtrives in vain to haſten on the hour,
Long promis'd by yourſelf to make her happy:
Yet you reproach your people. O! my queen,
Unjuſtly you complain.

*Cleo.* In Cleonice
If thus the realm confide, you cannot ſure
Refuſe her now ſome minutes of delay.

*Olin.* O Heaven! ſo oft our hopes have been deceiv'd,
With reaſon 'tis we fear. Two moons entire
Seleucia gave your pious grief to weep
A father's loſs; the third is in its wane,
Yet are you unreſolv'd. Sometimes to excuſe
Your long delay, you plead a fatal dream,
Or unpropitious day: now from the right
You ſee the lightning flaſh; now from the altar
Oblique aſcends the flame: the bird of night
Now breaks your ſlumbers with his funeral ſong;
And now your eyes involuntary pour
The ſudden tear.

*Cleo.* Alas! my fears were true.

*Olin.* After ſuch fond pretences, urg'd in vain,

At

At length this day you promis'd for your choice:
Your ſubjects all aſſembled, with impatience
Prevent the riſing morn: each decks his perſon
With utmoſt pomp to appear before his queen.
Some clothe their limbs in coſtly ſilken veſts,
Wrought by Sidonian virgins; ſome in wool,
Of deepeſt Tyrian dye; while o'er the brows
Of ſome the pride of foreign plumage nods
Amid the turban's folds; or from their temples
Depend the coſtly ſtrings of Indian pearl.
Others with gems and burniſh'd gold adorn
The ſtately trappings of the Parthian ſteed.
This day whate'er is precious Syria ſhows;
And every treaſure now is brought to light,
Which fearful avarice had for years conceal'd.

*Cleo.* How little this avails to eaſe my heart!

*Olin.* But wherefore all theſe cares, this uſeleſs pomp,
If from the morn till noon, in expectation,
From noon till eve they wait, yet wait in vain?
The night declines apace, but ſtill you come not.
Irreſolute, uncertain, ſtill you're loſt
In anxious doubts, while each delay ſeems ſhort
And inſufficient to confirm your thoughts:
Yet you reproach your people. O my queen,
Unjuſtly you complain.

*Cleo.* 'Tis all too true;
Yes, I muſt yield to hard neceſſity:

Go

Go then, and I will follow: I will chooſe
My huſband, and content my kingdom's wiſhes.

*Olin.* Reflect——remember that your faithful ſubject
Olinthus loves you——that my blood——

*Cleo.* I know
It flows unſullied from a race of heroes.

*Olin.* Then add to this the virtues of Phenicius.

*Cleo.* Of theſe I'm not to learn.

*Olin.* His prudent counſels—

*Cleo.* Oft have I prov'd their worth, and tried his faith;
Whate'er thou ſay'ſt, Olinthus, I confeſs.

*Olin.* And yet you know not all——unnoted long,
Enamour'd of your beauties, have I pin'd
A ſecret lover——

*Cleo.* O forbear, and leave me!

*Olin.* Can I forbear?

*Cleo.* Is this a time, Olinthus,
To talk of love? [*riſes.*

*Olin.* Why ſwells your indignation,
If pleading here forgiveneſs——

*Cleo.* Ceaſe, and leave me.

*Olin.*

*Olin.* What cauſe can now your anger move,
What may thoſe looks intend?
I knew not that to ſpeak of love
Would thus my queen offend.

'Tis from your charms my error flows,
Theſe paſſions you impart;
Love freedom on my tongue beſtows,
But binds in chains my heart. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.

*Enter* BARSENE.

*Cleo.* Alceſtes, O! where art thou? Lov'd Alceſtes,
Doſt thou not hear me? Still in vain I call,
In vain expect thy preſence.——My Barſene,
Perchance thou bring'ſt me news of glad import;
Say, is my dear Alceſtes yet return'd?

*Bar.* O would to Heaven he were! I come, my queen,
To haſten your approach: the populace
Begin to murmur loud at your delay,
Nor can you longer, but with utmoſt danger,
Protract your ſtay.

*Cleo.* O me unhappy! come [*going, ſhe ſtops.*
Let us depart to chooſe this huſband——Heaven!
My courage fails, Barſene: vainly reaſon

Would point me out that courſe my dubious heart
And tardy feet refuſe——Is there a wretch
So curs'd, ſo tortur'd, ſo forlorn as I?
[*throws herſelf in the chair.*

*Bar.* Why thus ingenious to torment yourſelf,
By feigning woes that are not?

*Cleo.* Feigning woes?
Is it a fiction then that tyrant duty
Conſtrains me now to bind myſelf in marriage,
A ſlave till death to one I cannot love?
To one perhaps who while with ſeeming tranſport
He ſeeks my hand, laments the hard condition
On which he buys the throne?

*Bar.* 'Tis true; but yet
The ſacred ties, the dear ſucceeding pledges
That bleſs the nuptial bed; and ſtealing time
Whoſe courſe can reconcile two hearts averſe;
All theſe, by ſlow degrees, will change averſion
To love, or ſoften it at leaſt to friendſhip.

*Cleo.* And what if my Alceſtes ſhould again
Return, and find me in another's arms!
What muſt become of both?—The thought diſ-
tracts me——
How ſhall I then repent my breach of faith!
What torment muſt be his to ſee me falſe!
Alas! I figure to myſelf his rage,
His juſt reproaches, and his jealous pangs,
And in his features every thought I read
His ſecret heart conceals.

*Bar.*

*Bar.* And can you hope
That ever he'll return? A ſeaſon now
Is paſt, ſince 'midſt the Cretan ranks, in battle
Your father fell; you know that by his ſide,
Alceſtes fought, nor has been heard of ſince.
Or now he groans in chains, or 'midſt the waves
He found his fate, or was in combat ſlain.

*Cleo.* No, my heart tells me that Alceſtes lives,
Alceſtes will return.

*Bar.* Should he return
You muſt be more unhappy. If to him
You give your hand, you ſlight a hundred lovers
That claim regard; or ſhould you chooſe another,
Alceſtes preſent at your fatal choice,
You kill the man you love: thus his arrival
But offers you this hard alternative,
To ſhow your cruelty to one, or prove
Unjuſt to many.

*Cleo.* Let him but return,
Some way may yet be found——

## SCENE III.

*Enter* MITHRANES.

*Mith.* O queen, what means
Your long delay? The peril grows more preſſing:
The people's patience now by ſlow degrees
Degenerates into tumult; nought can ſtop

The threatening miſchief but your ſpeedy preſence.

*Cleo.* Behold Barſene how Alceſtes comes!
Let us depart. [*riſes.*

*Bar.* Is then your choice determin'd?

*Cleo.* 'Tis not determin'd.

*Bar.* What is then your purpoſe?

*Cleo.* I know not what.

*Bar.* Will you thus unreſolv'd,
Expoſe yourſelf to ſuch a dangerous trial?

*Cleo.* I go, Barſene, whither fate compels me,
Without a friend to counſel or ſupport.

While thus a thouſand doubts I feel,
With empire and with love diſtreſt,
My heart afflicted ſcarce can tell
If hope or fear inſpire my breaſt.

A ſovereign's duty I confeſs;
I own the gentler paſſion's ſway:
I now reſolve, and now no leſs
Repent, and both by turns obey. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE IV.

BARSENE, MITHRANES.

*Bar.* Unhappy queen! her woes excite my pity.

*Mith.* Have you ſo much compaſſion for her pains,
And yet for me, Barſene, feel ſo little?

*Bar.* If pity's all you ſeek, I freely grant it;
But if you hope for love, your hopes are vain.

*Mith.* And have I not enough to make me wretched,
That thou would'ſt now deprive me even of hope?

*Bar.* Light are the ſufferings that you prove;
You freely may complain:
And if you cannot waken love,
At leaſt you pity gain.

But I, alas! in ſecret mourn,
All hopeleſs of relief;
Nor the dear youth, for whom I burn,
Is conſcious of my grief. [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

*Enter* PHENICIUS.

*Mith.* Fruitleſs compaſſion!

*Phen.* Say, Mithranes, where
Is Cleonice?

*Mith.* She at length compell'd,
Is gone to make th' election.

*Phen.* Then, my friend,
My cares are all in vain.

*Mith.* What doſt thou mean?

*Phen.* Yes, to thy well known faith I muſt reveal
A mighty ſecret; hear, and give me counſel.

*Mith.* Confide in me, I plight my truth, my honour
Ne'er to reveal it.

*Phen.* Thou remember'ſt well
That Alexander, Cleonice's father,
Drove from the throne our lawful king Demetrius.

*Mith.* Near thirty years have ſince elaps'd, but ſtill
The event is preſent to my mind.

*Phen.* Thou know'ſt
In cruel baniſhment Demetrius died:

Thou

Thou muſt have heard that with him died his ſon,
As yet an infant.

*Mith.* Yes, I recollect
He too was call'd Demetrius.

*Phen.* Now, my friend,
Learn that this royal offſpring ſtill ſurvives,
Nor is to thee unknown.

*Mith.* May I believe thee,
Or is it but a dream?

*Phen.* I'll tell thee further;
He in Alceſtes lives.

*Mith.* Immortal powers!
What do I hear!

*Phen.* His father, when he fled,
Intruſted him to me, and gave me charge
To have him nam'd Alceſtes: to his boſom
He preſs'd me tenderly, his fond embraces
Dividing thus betwixt his ſon and me,
With ſighs he cry'd: "Receive this precious pledge;
"Preſerve him for his father's ſake, preſerve him
"To aſſert a glorious vengeance and to reign."

*Mith.* Now I perceive the motive of your zeal:
But wherefore was he thus ſo long conceal'd?

*Phen.* Fearful to hazard yet a life ſo valu'd,
I ſpread the tidings that Demetrius liv'd,
But kept it ſecret that he was Alceſtes.

Thou need'ſt not here be told that this report
On Alexander brought the Cretan arms;
And that the tyrant in the battle fell.
But different was th' effect Demetrius' name
Produc'd in Syria; there the ambitious nobles
Refus'd their credit to the voice of rumour,
And hence a foreign aid was requiſite
To fix him on the throne: this aid from Crete
Is now expected; but it comes in vain.
Alceſtes is from hence——and, ah! I know not
If yet he lives——meantime our Cleonice
Elects a king.———

*Mith.* Should Cleonice now
Elect him, let Alceſtes but return,
Let him from Crete receive the promis'd ſuccours,
And vengeance ſtill is in his power.

*Phen.* Mithranes,
Far different my deſigns: I hop'd Alceſtes
Some future day to Cleonice join'd
In nuptial bands, with her might ſhare the throne;
For ſure the princeſs well deſerves to reign.
To this intent, in both their hearts I cheriſh'd
A growing paſſion; and had deſtiny——
But I neglect the hours in vain complaints.
My friend, I call'd thee to partake my cares,
Could we gain time we yet might reap the fruit
Of all our toils——Then let us go, and ſeek
To interrupt the choice; if nought beſide
Avail, I'll venture to diſcloſe the ſecret:

Do thou before the aſſembly ſecond me,
And if the great occaſion call for arms,
With arms aſſiſt me.

*Mith.* Here's my hand, my ſword,
In ſuch a cauſe my blood ſhall freely flow;
I ne'er can ſhed it in a nobler quarrel.
O! 'twere an envied death to loſe my life
In fighting for my king.

*Phen.* Come to my breaſt
Thou generous ſubject! thy fidelity
Brings tears into my eyes; within my heart
I feel new hopes, and by thy courage ſee
The Gods withdraw not yet their favour from us.

Safe through the ſtorm my veſſel flies,
The dangerous courſe while Virtue guides;
While Reaſon, near, her aid ſupplies;
While Glory in my breaſt reſides.

'Tis Virtue that my truth enſures;
'Tis Reaſon makes my courage more;
And Glory, after death, ſecures
My name from time's oblivious power. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

MITHRANES *alone.*

One like Alceſtes never could be born
In lowly cottages; his looks, his air,

His

His ſpeech betray'd him: even in humble ſtate
His actions all proclaim'd a princely heart.

A ſoul exalted, form'd to reign,
In lonely woods conceal'd in vain,
Still darts, by fortune though depreſs'd,
A ray of majeſty diſtreſs'd.

The blazing fire, though deeply hid,
Can never wholly ceaſe to ſhine:
Huge rivers in the narrow bed
Refuſe their currents to confine. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VII.

*A magnificent place with a throne on one ſide; ſeats oppoſite the throne for the Grandees of the kingdom. A proſpect of the principal port of* SELEUCIA, *with the harbour. Ships illuminated to ſolemnize the election of the new king.*

CLEONICE *preceded by the Grandees of the kingdom, followed by* PHENICIUS *and* OLINTHUS. *Guards and People.*

CHORUS.

Each God, and every Goddeſs hear!
Be preſent at our prayer:
Behold the important moment near
That muſt our king declare.

FIRST

FIRST CHORUS.

Hear! Mars and Cupid, now deſcend;
Your eyes unbind, your falchion ſheathe.

SECOND CHORUS.

Let Peace and Hymen here attend,
With kindled torch, and olive wreath.

FIRST CHORUS.

Come, Jove, and cloſe beſide thee wait
The ſubject Gods, with Chance and Fate.

SECOND CHORUS.

Benignant come to bleſs mankind,
And leave thy angry bolts behind.

CHORUS.

Each God, and every Goddeſs hear!
Be preſent at our prayer;
Behold the important moment near,
That muſt our king declare.

[*while this Chorus is ſung*, CLEONICE, *attended by* PHENICIUS, *aſcends the throne.*

*Olin.* O queen! all Syria with impatient zeal
Waits from your lips to hear their monarch nam'd,
At length reſolve——each, by reſpectful ſilence,
Would haſten on th' event.

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* Sit then——O Gods!
How cruel is this day! [*aſide.*

[Phenicius, Olinthus *and the reſt of the Grandees take their places.*

*Phen.* What means ſhe now! [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* Syrians attend: you rais'd me to the throne;
Your love deſerves my thanks; and yet your gift
Is clogg'd with hard conditions: midſt ſo many
Equal in birth, and equal in deſert,
Like me, who would not pauſe? In all my thoughts
Doubtful, irreſolute, now this, now that,
I chooſe, reject; a thouſand times an hour
I change my will. Behold I come to chooſe,
Yet ſtill I come uncertain, unreſolv'd.

*Phen.* Take then, O queen! a longer time to fix
Your undetermin'd mind.

*Olin.* A longer time?

*Phen.* Be ſilent—think not Syria means to preſs you
With zeal importunate: we all confeſs
How great muſt be your trial.

*Olin.* Is the courſe
Of three long moons ſo little? Thus indeed
May Cleonice ſtill proceed to promiſe,
And never yet reſolve.

*Phen.* Preſumptuous boy!
Whence ſprings this inſolence?

*Olin.*

*Olin.* 'Tis zeal, 'tis juſtice,
'Tis ſenſe of danger for my queen. Should Syria
This day be baffled in her hopes, I know not
To what extremes impatience may proceed.

*Phen.* They may repent their raſhneſs: thoſe who ſit
Supreme on thrones can brook compulſion ill.
Though length of years unnerve my body's ſtrength,
It has not damp'd the vigour of my ſoul:
No—theſe old veins ſhall pour forth all their blood
To guard my ſovereign's freedom——

*Cleo.* O Phenicius!
Forbear to furniſh cauſe for new contention.
What now avails it to defer th' election,
I ſtill ſhall be uncertain——Hear me then,
I now declare my choice——

*Phen.* You muſt not chooſe.
'Tis time we ſhould diſcover all. [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* What brings
Mithranes here with haſty ſteps?

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter* MITHRANES.

*Mith.* This inſtant,
In a ſmall bark, Alceſtes is arriv'd.

*Cleo.* Ye powers!

*Phen*

*Phen.* I breathe again.

*Cleo.* Where is Alceſtes?

*Mith.* He comes from yonder port.

*Cleo.* Phenicius, go;
And thou, Olinthus—O my fluttering heart!
Meet and embrace your now returning friend.
[*riſes, the reſt riſe at the ſame time.*
I had almoſt forgot I was a queen. [*aſide.*
[*reſumes her ſeat.*

[Phenicius *and* Mithranes *go to meet* Alceſtes, *who is ſeen to approach the ſhore in a ſmall veſſel; he lands, and they embrace.*

*Olin.* Unfortunate arrival! [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* See Alceſtes!
And doſt thou throb, my heart, to view the conqueror
That binds thee in his chains?

## SCENE IX.

*Enter* ALCESTES *from the port.*

*Alc.* At length has fate
Given me the wiſh'd-for happineſs, my queen,
To throw me at your feet: yes, Heaven allows me
Thus with theſe faithful lips to pay you here
The tribute of my conſtancy; moſt happy,
If 'midſt the cares that ſtill ſurround a throne,
You deign one royal look to grace my welcome.

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* Whate'er I am, or private, or a queen,
Still ſhalt thou find the ſame in Cleonice.
And art thou then Alceſtes now return'd,
So long expected, and ſo long bewail'd?

*Phen.* My hopes again revive. [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* But what diſaſter
Has thus withheld thee from us?

*Olin.* Patience, Heaven! [*aſide.*

*Alc.* You know that my departure with your father—

*Olin.* Alceſtes, we've been told the fight, the ſtorm,
The death of Alexander——

*Cleo.* Let him yet
Relate the reſt——Proceed. [*to* Alceſtes.

*Olin.* O pain to ſuffer! [*aſide.*

*Alc.* The courage of our troops began to ſink
When Alexander died: the adverſe bands
Already leap'd triumphant on our ſhips,
And horrid ſlaughter rag'd amidſt the vanquiſh'd.
Death ſtalk'd around in various ghaſtly forms;
Some in the waves expir'd; ſome breath'd their laſt
Tranſfix'd with hoſtile darts; and oft 'twas doubtful
If ſeas or foes deſtroy'd them. I meanwhile,
Preſerv'd amid the havock, hating life,
Stood on the veſſel's ſhatter'd prow, expos'd
To many a thouſand ſhaft: there long I fought,
Till

Till my blood ſtreaming faſt from every wound,
My ſenſes fail'd, and headlong from the height,
Into the ſeas I fell.

*Cleo.* My pitying heart! [*aſide.*

*Alc.* How long I floated on the waves I know not;
But when again I rais'd my heavy eyes,
They ſaw the ſhip no more; but I perceiv'd
Myſelf upon a homely bed reclin'd,
Beneath a ſimple roof: the walls around
Were hung with nets; and cloſe beſide me ſtood,
With gentle looks, a hoary fiſherman,
Bent by the weight of years.

*Cleo.* But ſay, what land
Had then receiv'd thee?

*Alc.* 'Twas the land of Crete,
A Cretan was my hoſt; he found me caſt
Half dead upon the ſhore, and with compaſſion
Convey'd me to his dwelling; then with care
Reſtor'd my fainting ſenſe, and to my wounds
Applied the ſovereign balm of healing plants:
With him I long remain'd; 'twas he provided
The bark that brought me hither.

*Phen.* Strange events!

*Olin.* At length the tale is done—'tis time—

*Cleo.* Olinthus,
I underſtand thee—I will chooſe my huſband;

Let

Let all be ſeated and attend.

[Phenicius, Olinthus *and the reſt of the Grandees take their places.*

*Alc.* I come
Moſt opportunely to the choice.

[Alceſtes *going to ſeat himſelf, is prevented by* Olinthus.

*Olin.* Forbear,
What would'ſt thou do?

*Alc.* Obey the queen's command.

*Olin.* And ſhall it be? Shall Syria then behold
A low-born ſhepherd ſeated by Olinthus?

*Alc.* Already Syria has enough diſtinguiſh'd
Alceſtes from the ſhepherd. Know, Alceſtes
Caſt off his former ſtate, when he reſign'd
The ſhepherd's crook to graſp the warrior's arms.

*Olin.* But in thoſe veins ſtill runs a peaſant's blood.

*Alc.* No—in theſe veins far different flows the ſtream;
For when I ſhed my blood in your defence,
I made it noble.

*Olin.* Which of all thy race
Haſt thou to boaſt? What now inſpires this boldneſs?

*Alc.* My own right hand, my courage, and my ſword.

*Olin.*

*Olin.* Since then——

*Phen.* Be ſilent yet—

*Olin.* Let us at leaſt
Be told the glory of his anceſtors.

*Phen.* The glory of thy race with thee concludes,
But his begins with him.

*Cleo.* No more—By virtue
Of my command Alceſtes is ennobled.

*Olin.* Yet in this place muſt none preſume to ſit,
But thoſe of higheſt rank.

*Cleo.* Well then, Alceſtes
Shall ſit as general of the Syrian armies;
Shall ſit as keeper of the royal ſignet:
Will this ſuffice, Olinthus?

[Alceſtes *ſeats himſelf.*

*Olin.* 'Tis too much— [*riſing.*
Give next yourſelf away; elect him king;
For all muſt ſee to what your purpoſe tends.

*Phen.* And dar'ſt thou raſhly anſwer thus thy ſovereign?
Hear me, O queen! to me commit the taſk
To puniſh this preſumptuous——

*Cleo.* To his merits,
And inexperienc'd youth, I pardon all:
But let him curb his ſpeech.

*Phen.* Sit then, and learn [*to* Olinthus.
At leaſt in ſilence to ſuppreſs thy temper.

Hear'ſt

Hear'ſt thou, Olinthus?

*Olin.* Sir——I will obey— [*ſits.*
I burn with rage. [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* Already in my heart
My choice is fix'd, but ere I ſpeak my thoughts,
This one condition grant: each preſent here
Muſt ſwear allegiance to th' elected king,
Whether a Syrian, or a ſtranger born,
Of blood illuſtrious, or of race obſcure.

*Olin.* Can I hear this? [*aſide.*

*Phen.* Whate'er he be, O queen!
I ſwear to obey him.

*Cleo.* Now, Olinthus, ſpeak.

*Phen.* Wilt thou not anſwer?

*Olin.* Let me ſtill be ſilent.

*Cleo.* Thou doſt perhaps refuſe it?

*Olin.* I have cauſe;
Nor I alone oppoſe the oath enjoin'd;
Others there are——

*Cleo.* 'Tis well——let thoſe who ſeek
On terms like theſe to reign, aſcend the throne:
I will not bear controlment in dominion.

[*riſes from the throne; all the reſt riſe from their ſeats at the ſame time.*

*Phen.* Heed not, O queen! the few that dare rebel;
But ſee the faithful many that obey.

*Cleo.* Phenicius, no—I never in my preſence
Muſt bear even from a few the voice of faction.
[*deſcends from the throne.*
Then let the general council of the ſtate
Determine for me. Suffer me to chooſe
Without the law's compulſion, or permit me
To quit this throne, which at your own requeſt
I firſt aſcended. In a private ſtation
I may, without a crime, on whom I pleaſe
Beſtow my heart; and be indeed a queen.

If on the throne I muſt obey,
Reſume again the pageant ſway,
For ſuch my ſoul diſdains.
The prince whoſe power to will is loſt,
Is but a titled ſlave at moſt,
And but in fancy reigns.
[*Exit followed by* Mithranes, *Grandees, guards and people.*

## SCENE X.

PHENICIUS, OLINTHUS, ALCESTES.

*Phen.* And muſt thy paſſions ever make me bluſh,
Nor wilt thou from the converſe of the wiſe,
Or their example, learn to rule thy conduct?

*Olin.* My father, wherefore are you thus unkind
To me your ſon? The power is yours to raiſe
Olinthus

Olinthus to the throne, and you oppoſe him.

*Phen.* Yes, Syria then would doubtleſs have a king
With every virtue; turbulent and raſh,
Unjuſt and violent——

*Olin.* Your lov'd Alceſtes
Would then be humble, generous, mild and prudent!
Ah! who will teach me now the art to gain
A father's dear affection?

*Phen.* Would'ſt thou gain
On my affection, imitate Alceſtes.

The careful peaſant when he ſpies
A tender tree that kindly grows;
His pains full gladly there applies,
And all his culture there beſtows.

But with regret he turns aſide,
Whene'er his nurſling he perceives
His former cares and toil deride,
With fruitleſs boughs and barren leaves.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE XI.

OLINTHUS, ALCESTES.

*Olin.* My father bids me in Alceſtes' ſchool
Learn to be virtuous—Come, begin to teach me:

And Heaven ſo frame my genius to receive
Inſtruction, not to ſhame ſo great a maſter.

*Alc.* My lord, from you alone I can ſupport
Such bitter taunts—the ſon of good Phenicius
May ſpeak without rebuke.

*Olin.* I was too bold
To dally with my king: forgive me, ſir,
If I offend the regal dignity.

*Alc.* Farewell, Olinthus, for you put my patience
To too ſevere a trial; you inſult me,
And truſt too much in that reſpect I owe you.

The ſeaman mocks the riſing breeze,
When firſt it blows a gentle gale;
But trembles, when the wind he ſees
With dreadful rage the waves aſſail.

The pilgrim, with regardleſs view,
Aloft a fleecy cloud eſpies;
'Till thence unlook'd-for ſtorms enſue,
And thunders rattle through the ſkies.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE XII.

OLINTHUS *alone.*

What man, unconſcious of Alceſtes' birth,
And race obſcure, but by his proud demeanour
Would

Would deem him ſprung from Pelops or Alcides?
Yet, ſpite of rank, with ſhame I own, Alceſtes
Is ſtill a rival that Olinthus fears.

What now avails a noble name,
The boaſted ſtock from which I came,
If, 'midſt the various turns of fate,
A ſhepherd-ſwain, of lowly ſtate,
With me for Syria's throne contends?
Blind Fortune! I the gift deſpiſe,
That in your changeful favour lies,
That on your partial ſmile depends. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIII.

*An inner garden of the royal palace.*

CLEONICE, BARSENE.

*Cleo.* Is it becauſe I love him that the world
Are all Alceſtes' foes? To oppoſe me thus,
But adds to my affection.

*Bar.* Now perhaps
The council has decided in your favour.
Why then before the time——

*Cleo.* Full well I know
The power of envy: at this very inſtant
Perhaps my empire's ended: yet, Barſene,
Think not that malice e'er can make me wretched:

In my Alceſtes' heart I more than reign.

*Bar.* O pangs of jealouſy! [*aſide.*

## SCENE XIV.

*Enter* PHENICIUS.

*Cleo.* Phenicius, ſpeak,
Has yet the council ſettled?

*Phen.* All is done.

*Cleo.* The reſt I underſtand without thy telling:
My reign is finiſh'd.

*Phen.* Better judge, my queen,
Of Syria and yourſelf: your faithful vaſſals
Have more reſpect and love. The power is yours
To raiſe the man you pleaſe, to ſhare the throne:
Whate'er may prove your choice, of high degree,
Or race obſcure, all ſwear to yield obedience.

*Cleo.* And can it be? What! in a few ſhort moments,
So chang'd from what they were?

*Phen.* Alas! you know not
How dear your ſubjects prize you: all appear'd
On this important day. With tranſport ſome
Extoll'd your form, where goodneſs ſeem'd to dwell:
Your wiſdom ſome, and ſome your virtues prais'd:
Some offer'd all their blood in your defence;
And, 'midſt their mingled raptures of applauſe,
O queen!

O queen! how many eager tongues at once
Pronounc'd the pleaſing name of Cleonice.

*Bar.* O my diſaſtrous love! [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* Go——to the council
Declare this meſſage—tell them that my heart
Is not inſenſible to ſuch high proofs
Of duteous zeal; that ſtill my care ſhall be
The kingdom never may repent the truſt
Plac'd in their queen; that Cleonice ever
With gratitude ſhall own it.

*Phen.* [*aſide.*] In Alceſtes
The rightful heir will now aſcend the throne.
[*Exit.*

## SCENE XV.

CLEONICE, BARSENE.

*Bar.* Behold how fortune ſeconds all your wiſhes:
See your deſires accompliſh'd; every ſorrow
Is now diſpers'd.

*Cleo.* O Heaven!

*Bar.* What means that ſigh?
Is there a cauſe of grief? This happy hour
The man you love is yours; and ſtill your eyes
Are dimm'd with ſtreaming tears.

*Cleo.* My dear Barſene,
Alceſtes now is loſt!

*Bar.* How loſt, my queen!

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* Shall then my ſubjects be more generous found
Than I their queen? And would'ſt thou Cleonice
Should by her partial fondneſs judge of merit,
Without regarding that illuſtrious throng
Of nobles that ſurround her? Shall ſhe raiſe
A ſhepherd to the throne to rule the world?
O! can I even in thought—It muſt not be.
Till now my glory urg'd me to ſubdue
The oppoſing voice of faction; that repell'd,
It now inſpires me to ſubdue myſelf.

*Bar.* How will Alceſtes bear it?

*Cleo.* If Alceſtes
Still love me as he ought, he'll love my glory.
O! he'll exult to find his Cleonice
Thus ſhine with native luſtre o'er her ſex,
Above the vulgar herd of common lovers.

*Bar.* I fear your beſt reſolves will ſhrink before him.

*Cleo.* Alas! my friend, I dare not meet the trial;
I know not if my virtue could ſupport it;
For O! my heart is fix'd too firmly his.
If I would conquer, I no more muſt view
That dear lov'd face.

SCENE

## SCENE XVI.

*Enter* MITHRANES.

*Mith.* Alceſtes ſeeks admittance.

*Cleo.* O Heaven! Barſene!

*Bar.* Now, confirm your ſtrength.

*Cleo.* Go—'tis no longer time— [*to* Mithranes.

*Mith.* Alceſtes comes. [*Exit.*

*Cleo.* Be reſolute my ſoul. [*aſide.*

## SCENE XVII.

*Enter* ALCESTES.

*Alc.* And is it given me
Without a bluſh, before my beauteous queen
To breathe my vows of conſtancy; to tell her
That abſent from her ſight I found no peace?
To tell her that my thoughts were only hers,
That ſhe's my love, my glory, and my life?

*Cleo.* Ah! ſpeak not thus.

*Alc.* Not ſpeak! can then theſe fond,
Theſe true profeſſions of my heart's affection,
That once were wont to pleaſe, offend thee now?
And is it thus, O Heaven! I find again
The ſame in Cleonice? Or am I
The ſame Alceſtes, that at length return'd,

So

So long expected, and so long bewail'd?

*Cleo.* O torture! [*aside.*

*Alc.* Yes, I see, I see it now;
A few short moons of absence have suffic'd
To freeze the hopes of ten years faithful love.

*Cleo.* Ah! would to Heaven——

*Alc.* What means that exclamation?
Tell me my crime; if ever I have wrong'd thee,
Let fate resume whate'er thy lavish hand
Has heap'd upon me: may those beauteous eyes,
Those eyes that rule my heart, that guide my life,
Still on Alcestes dart their angry beams.
Look on me——speak——

*Cleo.* I can endure no more——
Farewell!—— [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVIII.

BARSENE, ALCESTES.

*Alc.* Ye powers! what can this mean? Her words
Confus'd, her frequent sighs, her looks of sorrow,
All make me tremble—tell me then, Barsene,
Say whence this new, this cruel change proceeds?
From the dark workings of some secret foe?
Or is it but her own inconstancy,
The stars' injustice, or Alcestes' guilt?

*Bar.*

*Bar.* Even from my ſoul I pity your diſtraction:
Perchance ſome other beauty may be found
To make Alceſtes happier.

*Alc.* Firſt my life
Shall reach its lateſt period——ſtill I'll love her,
Though 'tis decreed I muſt no more have peace.
'Tis better far to ſuffer every torment
For Cleonice's ſake, than to receive
From other lips affection's tendereſt vows.

Her charms, that kindled firſt my flame,
The fuel ſtill ſupply:
Through life my paſſion burns the ſame,
With me alone ſhall die.

Should Love the faireſt maid incline
To hear and ſoothe my pain:
In vain to me her beauties ſhine,
Her pity ſooths in vain. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIX.

BARSENE *alone.*

What would'ſt thou more, my heart? Subject thyſelf
To be refus'd, contemn'd! thy hopes are fruitleſs
To overcome Alceſtes' conſtancy.
Yet who can tell th' event? Long time and ſuffering
Perhaps may conquer——by repeated drops

The

The obdurate rock is worn; and ſtubborn oaks
Yield to the ſounding axe's frequent blows.
But ſhould I be deceiv'd? Alas! I fear
The youth I dote on, conſtant to his purpoſe,
Will more relentleſs prove than ſtones or trees.

My ſoul her freedom ſeeks to gain,
Would fain reſolve to break her chain,
But this the flatterer Hope denies.
Of all the paſſions in our breaſt,
This firſt is born, an early gueſt,
And is the laſt that dies.

Yet, ah! to heal diſtemper'd minds
How little Hope conſpires,
But only conſtant fuel finds
For credulous deſires. [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

## ACT II. SCENE I.

*A gallery.*

ALCESTES, OLINTHUS.

*Alc.* And wherefore doſt thou now oppoſe my paſſage?
I haſte to the apartment of the queen.

*Olin.* Thou muſt not enter there, the queen forbids thee:
Olinthus ſays it.

*Alc.* Here at leaſt I'll wait
Till I'm again permitted to behold her.

*Olin.* My word may ſure ſuffice: thou muſt not now
Attempt to appear in Cleonice's preſence:
She has forbidden thee to be admitted,
Nor e'er will ſee thee more.—Yet doſt thou hear me?

*Alc.* See me no more!——O Heaven!

*Olin.* I ſee, Alceſtes,
Thou art ſtruck at this command.

*Alc.* Olinthus, no.
Forgive me, but I cannot yet believe thee:
To me my queen can ne'er be ſo unjuſt.
O! wherefore ſhould ſhe doom to ſuch affliction

The

The man whoſe faith to her has prov'd unſhaken?
Olinthus, either thou deceiv'ſt thyſelf,
Or me thou would'ſt deceive.

*Olin.* And dar'ſt thou then
Still doubt my truth?

*Alc.* If I have dar'd too far,
I ſhall know all from her. [*going.*

*Olin.* Yet ſtay.

## SCENE II.

*Enter* MITHRANES.

*Mith.* Alceſtes,
Say, whither would'ſt thou go?

*Alc.* Detain me not;
I fly to Cleonice,

*Mith.* O! my friend,
Thou art denied admittance to her ſight.

*Alc.* Is it then true that I'm forbid——

*Mith.* Too true.

*Alc.* For pity's ſake, Mithranes, plead my cauſe;
Return, and tell her that this cruel ſtroke
Is more than all my firmneſs can ſupport:
Tell her ſome envious tongue has wrong'd my fame,
That ſtill I'm true, that ſhould ſhe think me guilty,
I at her feet can clear my ſullied honour.

*Mith.*

*Mith.* I dare not now obey you; for the queen
Has given us charge to ſpeak of you no more,
And makes it criminal to name Alceſtes.

*Alc.* But ſay the cauſe.

*Mith.* From me ſhe keeps it ſecret.

*Alc.* Alas! I am betray'd: ſome impious wretch
Belies me to her: but whoe'er thou art
Tremble, thou traitor; think not thou ſhalt long
Be hid from my reſentment: in the temple
I'll pierce thy heart, nor ſhall the ſacred altar
Preſerve thee from my rage.

*Olin.* Theſe threats, Alceſtes,
Are ſpent in vain.

*Alc.* Alas!—forgive, my friends,
The tranſport of a mind diſturb'd: my ſtate
Deſerves compaſſion, and I aſk it of you.
O! ſpeak in my behalf: at leaſt with pity
Reflect that, midſt his many griefs, Alceſtes
Is now reduc'd to place his truſt in you.

Is there a man whoſe ſavage heart
No ſenſe of ſoft compaſſion proves,
For one, though guiltleſs, doom'd to part
For ever from the fair he loves?

Though cruel ſtars my death decree,
Yet nothing from my ſoul can tear
Her image which I ever ſee,
Which ever in my breaſt I bear. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE III.

OLINTHUS, MITHRANES.

*Olin.* At length 'tis done——the ruin of Alceſtes
Secures to me the empire——Yes, Mithranes,
Already hope anticipates my joy.

*Mith.* The wiſe rely not eaſily on hope.
A happineſs, in confidence expected,
When 'tis withheld, afflicts us like a loſs:
Thou art deceiv'd, if thus thy hopes allure thee.
It were a happineſs indeed to reign,
If headſtrong paſſions would reſpect the throne:
If nothing more remain'd for him to wiſh,
Who once had worn the veſt of royalty;
But one deſire extinct, another ſprings,
The object chang'd it loſes not its ſtrength.
If now thou find'ſt not peace within thyſelf,
Learn thou wilt ſtill be wretched in the ſtate
Of wiſh'd-for empire.

*Olin.* Think'ſt thou not the pleaſure
Is mighty, to command?

*Mith.* The good we ſeek
By cuſtom grows familiar; every joy
Is more in expectation than poſſeſſion.
Thou canſt not tell the burden of a crown,
Nor what it coſts to attain the arts of ſway.

*Olin.* By reigning, 'tis we learn to rule.

*Mith.* 'Tis true:
But he, who learns by ruling, oft muſt err,
And every little error in a king,
Is criminal eſteem'd.

*Olin.* Of this, Mithranes,
I cannot ſpeak; for taught alone to wield
The ſword and ſpear, 'tis not for me to fathom
The paſſions of mankind: ſuch deep reſearches
Demand maturer years, and frequent converſe
In Egypt's temples, or the Athenian porch.

*Mith.* There needs not ſure the wiſdom taught at Athens
Or Egypt, to preſerve our faith unbroken?
Haſt thou not lov'd Barſene till this hour?

*Olin.* And ſtill I love her.

*Mith.* Canſt thou, loving her,
Deſire a throne that certain makes her loſs.

*Olin.* And wilt thou, with a kingdom gain'd, compare
The loſing of a heart?

*Mith.* By proofs like theſe
Fidelity is known.

*Olin.* In love, Mithranes,
What faith is to be found? Through every part
'Tis vaunted oft, but little 'tis preſerv'd.

See the boaſted truth of lovers
Like the Arabian bird renown'd,
Vouch'd by all, but none diſcovers
Where the wonder may be found.

Canſt thou tell what climes conceal him,
Where he dies and lives again?
When to me thou wilt reveal him,
Then my love ſhall fix'd remain. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

MITHRANES *alone.*

The lighteſt breath of Fortune's doubtful gale
Can elevate his thoughtleſs youth: already
Olinthus ſeems to graſp the regal ſceptre;
Already ſees himſelf on Syria's throne;
How weak is man when paſſion blinds the ſoul!

## SCENE V.

MITHRANES, CLEONICE.

*Cleo.* Who waits there?. I would write.
[*ſpeaks to a page as entering.*
Depart, Mithranes.

*Mith.* I ſhall obey you. [*going.*

*Cleo.* Hear me——Has Alceſtes
Again enquir'd of me?

*Mith.* He has, O queen!
No other care—but ſtill the unhappy youth——

*Cleo.* Depart——enough——yet hear, what could he ſay?

*Mith.* He vows that ſtill he's true to love,
That treacherous arts your boſom move,
That ne'er your heart could cruel prove,
Where goodneſs once was wont to reſt.
He dies to ſee your anger paſt,
Before your feet to breathe his laſt,
The victim of his love diſtreſt. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* BARSENE.

*Bar.* All is prepar'd, my queen: here in this paper
You to Alceſtes may reveal your purpoſe.

*Cleo.* And ſhall I not in this be moſt inhuman
To him and to myſelf? Yet would I fain
Subdue my heart, would fain eſtrange him from me:
For this the realm expects, my glory prompts,
Heaven wills, and Cleonice muſt obey.
But from my lips at leaſt he may be told it;
'Tis tyranny by letter to convey
Such cruel tidings to him——No, my friend,
What other conſolation can remain

For two unhappy lovers, doom'd to part,
Than to complain at leaſt with mutual ſorrow,
To dwell on all their former tenderneſs,
And mourn together in their laſt adieu?

*Bar.* Is this a conſolation then?——O no,
A wiſh to ſee Alceſtes has betray'd you.
Truſt not yourſelf again to ſuch a trial:
Reſiſting once you have enough perform'd,
You loſe the fruit of your firſt victory
Should you attempt a ſecond——Well I know
One interview would weaken your reſolves,
And ſtronger make the foe. Complete, my queen,
The generous work: in you your ſubjects hope:
Reflect that on your conſtancy to bear
This cruel ſtroke, that fills your ſoul with anguiſh,
Muſt now depend your glory.

*Cleo.* Tyrant glory!
And muſt I die to keep my fame unſullied?
Or, while I live, for ever mourn the loſs
Of all I hold moſt dear?——Inhuman duty!
Thou ſhalt be ſatisfied——yes, I will write.

*Bar.* My fate begins to ſmile; I ſtill have hopes
Alceſtes may be mine. [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* "Belov'd Alceſtes,"—— [*writing.*

*Bar.* Yes, I may boaſt of happineſs indeed,
If 'midſt th' emotions of her troubled mind,
For ſome few moments glory keeps her ſeat.
[*aſide.*

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* " Our fate permits us not to live in peace."—— [*writing.*

*Bar.* My hopes increaſe—O Heaven! ſhe now withdraws
Her trembling hand, and leans her penſive cheek:
Alas! her firſt affections are return'd! [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* My poor undone Alceſtes!
[*ſpeaks, then writes again.*

*Bar.* How I tremble
Leſt ſhe repent: yet were I Cleonice
I know not how my heart could bear the conflict.
[*aſide.*

*Cleo.* [*writing.*] " Still live, my beſt belov'd, but not for me."—
'Tis done, Barſene. [*riſing.*

*Bar.* We have reach'd the port. [*aſide.*
Yes, juſtly Heaven has deſtin'd for the throne
A mind like yours exalted.

*Cleo.* Take this paper:
The care be thine——[*about to give her the paper.*

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* PHENICIUS.

*Phen.* Have pity, gracious queen!

*Cleo.* For whom doſt thou implore it?

*Phen.* For Alceſtes.

But now I met him pale, and ſcarce alive,
Half frantic with his grief: the harſh decree
That dooms him never to behold you more,
Is ſuch a ſtroke as ſtabs him to the heart.
By turns he ſighs, he raves, he prays, he threatens,
But 'midſt his rage and grief remembers you,
And you alone; each moment he repeats
Your much lov'd name, that even obdurate rocks
Might pity his diſtreſs.

*Cleo.* Unjuſt Phenicius,
From thee my ſtaggering virtue hop'd to find
A kind ſupport, but ne'er from thee expected
A motive to betray it. Why, ah! why
Doſt thou return, with barbarous cruelty,
To ſearch the wound ſtill bleeding in my breaſt?

*Phen.* Forgive the warmth of fond paternal love,
That prompts me thus: Alceſtes is my ſon,
Son of my choice, ſon of my deareſt cares,
The happy plant which I have foſter'd long,
That flouriſh'd in the beams of princely favour,
Beneath your royal eye; the kingdom's hope;
The hope and ſtay of my declining age.

*Bar.* O ill-tim'd zeal! [*aſide.*

*Phen.* And muſt I now behold
My expectations in a moment blaſted?
Ah! queen, I cannot boaſt ſuch ſtrength in age
As will enable me a ſingle day
To outlive this fatal ſhock.

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* What can I do?
What would Alceſtes? Say, what conſolation
Does he from me require to eaſe his ſufferings?

*Phen.* To view you once again and die.

*Cleo.* O Heaven!

*Phen.* Faireſt of queens! I ſee your heart is mov'd:
Have pity on Alceſtes, on Phenicius;
Think on theſe ſilver hairs, theſe years of ſervice;
My well-tried faith ſure merits ſome indulgence.

*Cleo.* Who longer could reſiſt?——Go, bid him enter. [*tears the paper, and riſes.*

*Bar.* Behold my kindling hopes again extinguiſh'd. [*aſide.*

*Phen.* It is enough——let her but ſee Alceſtes,
Alceſtes will o'ercome. [*going, meets* Olinthus.

## SCENE VIII.

*Enter* OLINTHUS.

*Olin.* My queen, my father,
Alceſtes is no longer in Seleucia;
By my device already he's departed.

*Cleo.* What ſay'ſt thou?

*Phen.* Wherefore?

*Olin.* With ungovern'd warmth
Importunate he ſought once more to ſee you;
Hence,

Hence, in your name, I gave him ſtrict command
Inſtant to quit the realm.

*Cleo.* And when from me
Didſt thou receive ſuch orders?——Guards! O
Heaven! [*Guards enter.*
Haſte, be Alceſtes found and brought before us.
[*Guards go out.*

*Phen.* Unhappy me! [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* But ſhould their ſearch be vain,
Tremble, raſh youth, 'tis thou ſhalt pay the forfeit
Of thy preſumption.

*Olin.* I but hop'd to ſerve you,
Removing thus a dangerous obſtacle,
That might obſtruct your glory.

*Cleo.* Who made thee
The guardian of my glory? Could I ever
Have but foreſeen, Phenicius, this misfortune?
Sure all the world conſpire againſt my peace.

In ſorrow's lap my infant years
Were from the hapleſs cradle bred;
And Fortune ſtill averſe appears;
In ſorrow ſtill my days are led.

While Love each vain reſolve deſtroys;
No longer fix'd my thoughts remain;
Yet Love, alas! no peace enjoys,
Nor finds the bliſs he ſeeks to gain. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE IX.

BARSENE, PHENICIUS, OLINTHUS.

*Olin.* Tell me, my lord, when have you known a mind
Changeful like Cleonice's? At one inſtant
She loves, and hates; now aſks to ſee Alceſtes,
And now forbids his preſence; while on others
She lays the blame of her ſtill wavering purpoſe.

*Phen.* Raſh boy! and doſt thou thus reſpect thy ſovereign?
At leaſt for once be taught to curb thy ſpeech.
O! I deſpair to amend him! [*to* Barſene.

*Bar.* Ripening days
Will bring maturer thought: as yet Olinthus
Is but in life's firſt ſpring.

*Phen.* I too, Barſene,
Have known the ſpring of life: theſe locks that now
Are thinn'd and white with time, were beauteous once;
Then, happy times! 'twas not with ſuch contempt
Youth heard the wholeſome counſels of the wiſe:
But now the world declines, and growing old
Degenerates from its virtue. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE X.

BARSENE, OLINTHUS.

*Olin.* To content
The auſterity of age, we muſt begin
To act the hero from our infant years;
But, ah! Barſene, different is the plan
Of ſprightly youth. Say, does Olinthus ſtill
Share in thy tenderneſs?

*Bar.* Alas! my lord,
Why would you mock me thus? Since long ere this
Mine have been ſhaken off for nobler chains,
And, to her ſovereign, pleas'd Barſene yields?

I know in ſport thou ſeek'ſt my love:
Know too, but few the tears I ſhed;
But little grief my ſoul can move,
To find a faithleſs lover fled.

Another now my heart inſpires;
To him my fond affections turn;
And in my breaſt the pleaſing fires
Still burn, and ſhall for ever burn. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XI.

OLINTHUS *alone.*

Barſene's ſcorn, and Cleonice's anger,
Alceſtes' fortune, and the harſh rebukes
Of a ſtern father might have damp'd the fire
In every common mind: but 'tis not theſe
Can terrify Olinthus. Great attempts
Demand an equal courage: noble ſpirits
Start not at perils, nor refuſe fatigues;
And favouring fortune oft befriends the bold.

He ne'er with venturous veſſel braves
The ſea, when loud the tempeſt raves,
Who, pale with fear, the diſtant waves
In ſafety from the land ſurveys.
He ne'er attempts to mix in fight,
Who trembles at the glittering light
Of armour, and the falchion's blaze. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XII.

*A room with ſeats.*

CLEONICE *alone.*

Now, Cleonice, now, thy trial comes:
To ſee thy lov'd Alceſtes once again,
And ſee him for the laſt! and haſt thou courage

To

To ſpeak thyſelf the fatal ſentence to him?
To bid him leave thee, drive thee from his thoughts?
Far better had it been to let him go.

## SCENE XIII.

*Enter* MITHRANES.

*Mith.* My gracious queen, Alceſtes is at hand,
After ſuch pangs reſtor'd again to life,
He waits once more impatient to behold you.

*Cleo.* How my heart throbs! [*aſide.*

*Mith.* Phenicius ſaw and cheer'd him,
Told him the power he ſtill had in your breaſt,
At this recovering, like a tender flower
That riſes to the ſun, ſurcharg'd with dew,
He clear'd his brow, again the colour fluſh'd
His glowing cheek, and every look was chang'd;
While fill'd with hope and unexpected joy,
Love mix'd with tranſport brighten'd in his face.

*Cleo.* And muſt I loſe him then? [*aſide.*
Depart, Mithranes,
Bid him approach, I here expect his coming.

*Mith.* O fortunate Alceſtes! [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XIV.

CLEONICE *alone.*

Where, ah! where
Are now the boaſted thoughts of fame and empire?
Ah! what has driven you hence? To guard my ſoul
In this dire trial, this approaching conflict,
I ſeek you in my breaſt but cannot find you;
This is the dreadful moment——Can I place
My hopes in you, when at the name alone
Of him I love, you thus at once forſake me?
Return, O Heaven! return: aſſemble all,
Confirm my weak reſolves, and teach my heart
To bear unmov'd the laſt aſſaults of love.

## SCENE XV.

*Enter* ALCESTES.

*Alc.* O queen ador'd! no longer I'll believe
That grief deſtroys us: 'tis deception all,
To ſay affliction's iron hand cuts ſhort
The lingering hapleſs hours of painful life.
O! were it true, Alceſtes had not liv'd:
But if my woes have purchas'd this reward,
This wiſh'd-for meeting, happy are my ſufferings;
Whate'er I've felt is amply now repaid.

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* Heart-breaking tenderneſs! [*aſide.*

*Alc.* If thou art ſtill
To me the ſame as I am ſtill to thee;
If it indeed be true that I may yet
Hope every thing from Cleonice's goodneſs;
O! tell me now by what unknown offence
Have I deſerv'd ſuch rigour from my queen?

*Cleo.* Thou ſhalt know all, Alceſtes; ſit, and hear me. [*ſits.*

*Alc.* I ſhall obey my ſovereign. [*ſits.*

*Cleo.* Chilling fear
Benumbs my heart. [*aſide.*

*Alc.* I feel my hopes revive. [*aſide.*

*Cleo.* Alceſtes, doſt thou love indeed thy queen?
Or art thou but enamour'd of her rank,
Her regal fortune, and illuſtrious race?

*Alc.* And can you think ſuch motives urge Alceſtes?
Or, by your doubts, would you reproach my birth,
My low paternal cottage? 'Midſt the woods
That gave me life, that nurs'd my early years,
I left ſuch abject thoughts; or rather ſay
I never knew them——No——In Cleonice
I love the charms, ſubjected not to change
Of fortune or of age, her noble mind
That in its native virtues bright, reflects
More ſplendor on the crown and regal ſceptre,
Than royal dignity on her beſtows.

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* May I not then from ſuch a generous lover
Expect ſome glorious proof of fortitude?

*Alc.* Speak your command, Alceſtes ſhall obey.

*Cleo.* You promiſe much.

*Alc.* And I'll perform it all.
Each danger muſt be light, when prov'd for thee.
Securely will I dare the tempeſt's rage;
Or if thou bidſt me go, expoſe my boſom
Unarm'd, defenceleſs, to th' embattled foes.

*Cleo.* I aſk much more, Alceſtes——thou muſt leave me.

*Alc.* Leave thee!——O Heaven!—what is it thou haſt ſaid?

*Cleo.* Yes, thou muſt leave me, muſt for ever leave me,
And live without me in ſome diſtant clime.

*Alc.* But who preſcribes this cruel doom?

*Cleo.* My honour,
The genius of my ſubjects, juſtice, duty;
That virtue you admire in Cleonice,
Which gives more brightneſs to the diadem,
Than royal dignity on her beſtows.

*Alc.* And can you then, with conſtancy unmov'd,
Command me to forſake you?

*Cleo.* Ah! thou know'ſt not—

*Alc.* I've known enough; I ſee thou lov'ſt me not. [*riſes.*

Appeaſe

Appeaſe thy glory, ſatisfy thy vaſſals,
And carry to the throne the ſtain of falſehood;
While wandering through the world I bear in mind
The deep remembrance of thy faith betray'd;
If grief permit Alceſtes to ſurvive. [*going.*

*Cleo.* Leave me not yet.

*Alc.* O! I too much reſpect
Great Cleonice's rank: a baſe-born ſhepherd,
By ſtaying longer here, will but debaſe
Her royal dignity.

*Cleo.* Thou doſt deride me,
Ungrateful man!

*Alc.* And am I then ungrateful?
Have I forſaken thee, and ſacrific'd
My faith, my promiſes, my oaths, my love,
To pomp and ſtate?—Inhuman, perjur'd woman!

*Cleo.* Yes, from thy lips I will endure it all:
If thou haſt more to utter, give it vent;
But when thou art weary of inſulting me,
Let Cleonice in her turn reply.

*Alc.* What canſt thou ſay, ingrate, for thy defence?
Doſt thou then hope to varniſh o'er the guilt
Of falſehood black as thine?

*Cleo.* O yet, Alceſtes,
Forbear to judge too raſhly——ſit and hear me.

*Alc.*

*Alc.* Heavens! in her power how much ſhe ſtill confides! [*aſide, ſits again.*

*Cleo.* Alceſtes, if thou wilt but recollect
That ten revolving years thou haſt been ſtill
The deareſt object of my conſtant wiſhes,
Thou wilt believe what anguiſh I muſt feel
In parting from thee now: but Cleonice,
Before the world conſtrain'd to chooſe a king,
No longer can conſult her ſecret heart;
But, ſuch her rigid fate, muſt ſacrifice
Each fond affection to her tyrant glory,
And to the peace of others.

*Alc.* Did not then
The council make thee miſtreſs of thy choice?

*Cleo.* They did; and I might now abuſe my power
And raiſe thee to the throne: but canſt thou think
So many peers, unjuſtly thus excluded,
Would tamely bear the wrong? Inſidious plots,
And open inſults, with eternal diſcord,
Would ſhake the realm, diſtract thyſelf and me.
The weakneſs of my ſex, thy youth, thy birth
Would furniſh arms for calumny: our names
Through Aſia, in a thouſand mouths, would prove
Foul matter for deriſion. No, Alceſtes,
Let envy want its food, and let our virtue
Example be to others: let the world
Behold and wonder at our fortitude;
While pity's eye ſhall drop a tender tear

To ſee the fate of two unhappy lovers,
Who thus for glory break the pleaſing ties
Of love ſo juſt, by length of years confirm'd.

*Alc.* Why was I, cruel Gods! a ſhepherd born!

*Cleo.* Go—let us yield to fate—far, far from me
Live and be happy——moderate thy ſorrows,
Thou ſhalt have little cauſe, my dear Alceſtes,
To grieve that I remain unfaithful to thee.
No——from this moment I begin to die:
Theſe tears perhaps the laſt I ſhed—farewell!
No longer call me perjur'd and inhuman.

*Alc.* O Heaven!——forgive me, thou exalted fair one, [*kneels.*
Live ſtill, my queen, preſerve thy fame unſullied:
I bluſh to own my folly——yes, I am happy
If from ſo dear a teacher I can learn
Such conſtancy and virtue.

*Cleo.* Riſe, and leave me,
If it indeed be true thou lov'ſt my virtue.

*Alc.* Here, on this hand that muſt no more be mine,
At leaſt permit my trembling lips to ſeal
One parting kiſs, ere yet I go——

*Both.* Adieu!

*Alc.*

*Alc.* I cannot curb the tear that falls,
While on my tongue the farewell dies;
Yet 'tis not grief alone that calls
These trickling waters from my eyes.

Repentance, wonder, hope, and love,
Th' emotion, which I feel, impart:
At once a thousand thoughts I prove,
That crowd tumultuous to my heart. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVI.

CLEONICE *alone.*

At length ambitious views be satisfied:
See me forsaken, see me now depriv'd
Of all I priz'd!——what unpropitious power
Implanted in mankind this thirst of honour?
What to the world avails this tyrant glory,
If purchas'd with such pain? If we to live
For that, must die to every bliss beside?

## SCENE XVII.

*Enter* BARSENE *and* PHENICIUS.

*Bar.* Is it then true, my queen, that you have gain'd
So great a triumph o'er your fond affection,
Even in the presence of the man you love?

*Phen.* And is it true that Cleonice proves
So barbarous to herſelf and to Alceſtes?

*Cleo.* 'Tis all too true.

*Phen.* I thought ſuch cruelty
Ne'er harbour'd in your breaſt.

*Bar.* I hop'd no leſs
From conſtancy like yours.

*Phen.* The inhuman deed
All will deteſt who feel a touch of pity.

*Bar.* Each generous mind that owns the force of virtue,
Muſt praiſe the glorious action.

*Phen.* By your rigour
What have you loſt?

*Bar.* What laſting honour won?

*Phen.* Ah! yet revoke——

*Bar.* Still perſevere——

*Cleo.* O Heaven!
Be ſilent; wherefore would you thus diſtreſs me?
What would you more?

*Phen.* I would, while yet 'tis time,
Free you from this deluſion.

*Bar.* I would ſtill
Preſerve the triumph of your conſtancy.

*Cleo.* Meanwhile you kill me both, my mind alike

Deteſts

Deteſts its ſufferings, and deteſts the cure;
Who ſeeks to aid me, haſtens on my death.

Though fann'd by gentle breath of air,
The torch, when ready to expire,
Demands a more than wonted care
To keep alive its dying fire.

If now your pity would beſtow
Some eaſe to my afflicted heart;
Why will you add new force to woe,
And but increaſe my ſecret ſmart? [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVIII.

PHENICIUS, BARSENE.

*Phen.* I cannot tell, Barſene, what to think
Of this exceſs of zeal: thy watchful care
To guard her glory carries thee too far.
It cannot be that maxims ſo ſevere
Inſpire thy gentle ſex: thou doſt conceal
Some private intereſt in thy breaſt, beneath
Theſe ſpecious ſhows of honour—Thou art ſilent—
A bluſh o'erſpreads thy cheek—ſpeak—can it be?
Art thou the rival then of Cleonice?
Even now I ſaw thee on Alceſtes turn
Thy looks by ſtealth, nor did thy ſighs eſcape me.
But no, thou canſt not thus ungrateful prove;
Thy ſovereign then with juſtice might reproach
thee.

*Bar.* Is it my fault, Phenicius, if I love?

From love's dominion would be found
Our pleaſure, not our pain,
If every heart, which he has bound,
Could break at will its chain.

But entering love's alluring ſtate,
We know not half his wiles;
And when we know, 'tis then too late
To ſtruggle in the toils. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIX.

PHENICIUS *alone.*

What canſt thou more, Phenicius? Every thing
Oppoſes thy deſigns——Protecting Gods!
Ye juſt aſſerters of the rights of kings,
To you my heart is known——I do not aſk
A ſceptre for this hand; ſuch ſelfiſh views
Would ill deſerve your favour——no——I ſeek
Your heavenly ſuccour for an injur'd prince:
Yet let me not deſpair; for oft we find
A day ſerene ſucceed a lowering morn,

Sometimes

Sometimes beneath tempeſtuous ſkies,
When round him mountain-ſurges riſe,
The trembling ſailor's veſſel flies,
And ſafely gains the port at laſt.
Beſide the margin of the ſtrand,
In happier days behold him ſtand,
And to his friends, upon the ſand,
Deſcribe his toils and dangers paſt. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

## ACT III. SCENE I.

*A gate of the palace facing the ſea ſhore: a veſſel with ſailors ready for the departure of* ALCESTES.

OLINTHUS *alone.*

'Tis ſo——I ſhall be ſoon without a rival:
At length Alceſtes muſt forſake theſe ſhores:
But yet I tremble at his long delay;
And what if Cleonice ſhould repent!
O! I would never——no——it cannot be:
'Tis but his friends, perhaps, who loth to part,
With many a fond embrace protract his ſtay.

## SCENE II.

*Enter* ALCESTES *and* PHENICIUS *converſing.*

*Alc.* My lord, forbear; ſince 'tis in vain you hope
To keep me longer here.

*Olin.* Behold, Alceſtes,
The veſſel is prepar'd, the ſailors wait,
The wind is friendly, and ſerene the ſea.

*Phen.* Olinthus, peace—[*to* Olinthus.] At leaſt but for awhile
Defer thy parting hence; 'tis not for nought

I aſk

I aſk it——ſtay——thou never ſhalt have cauſe
To wiſh thou hadſt not heard me—till this hour
Thou know'ſt I've been a friend, a parent to thee.

*Olin.* Was then my father wanting to detain him? [*aſide.*

*Alc.* What can I ſay? The queen's command forbids me
To hearken to thy counſel.

*Olin.* 'Tis moſt true;
Alceſtes ſpeaks with reaſon.

*Phen.* Canſt thou leave me?
Wilt thou depart, and ſhall Phenicius ſtay?
I hop'd thou better would'ſt return my love.

*Alc.* My deareſt father: ſuch I ſure may call thee:
Such haſt thou been—O ſay not I'm ungrateful:
Thou ſtabb'ſt me to the heart: I little thought
To ſee theſe hapleſs fruits of all thy cares.
Alas! I hop'd that, bred beneath thy ſight,
And treading in thy ſteps the paths of honour,
I might ſome day have call'd into thine eyes
The tender tears of pleaſure not of grief.
But who can change the purpoſe of the ſtars?
Permit me to be gone; departing thus,
I may be leſs ungrateful to thy love.
Perchance the fellowſhip of the unhappy
Communicates misfortune. Yet at leaſt,
Since I'm become ſo hateful to the Gods,

Let

Let them diſturb no other days than mine;
Let fortune's angry darts on me be ſpent,
Nor one be left to pierce thy reverend age.

*Phen.* O ſpeak not thus, my ſon: thou doſt not know
The vaſt importance of a life like thine:
Mine is a burden uſeleſs to myſelf,
Unleſs it can avail to ſerve Alceſtes.

*Alc.* You weep, my lord: I merit not theſe tears.
Alas! I ſhould not thus prolong your ſorrows—
Farewell!——farewell, to both! [*going.*

*Olin.* Thanks to the Gods! [*aſide.*

*Alc.* [*returning.*] To you, my friends, I recommend the care
Of my afflicted queen——O ſhe will need
Your kind ſupport in her diſtreſsful ſtate.
Who knows how dear her virtue may have coſt!
What anguiſh may have rent her tender heart,
To find herſelf forſaken; to deſpair
Of ever ſeeing her Alceſtes more!
To bear ſtill preſent in her memory
The happy moments paſt, each place—O Heaven!
Speak comfort to her grief—my friends, farewell!
[*as he is going out, he meets* Cleonice.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*Enter* CLEONICE.

*Cleo.* Alceſtes, ſtay.

*Alc.* Ye powers!

*Olin.* Another bar
To his departure! [*aſide.*

*Alc.* Wherefore, O! my queen,
Come you again to make my pains revive?

*Cleo.* Phenicius and Olinthus, for awhile
Retire apart, and leave me with Alceſtes.

*Olin.* My duty bids me with my friend remain.

*Cleo.* Thou may'ſt return to take thy laſt fare-well.

*Olin.* I will obey——but cannot now believe
Alceſtes ever will depart. [*aſide.*] [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

CLEONICE, ALCESTES, PHENICIUS.

*Phen.* O queen!
You come in time, 'tis not in vain that Heaven
Prolong'd his ſtay: you yet may make him happy.

Reflect

Reflect how cruel muſt you prove,
From all you prize, to part;
Reflect you live but in his love,
He lives but in your heart.

Remember ſtill the gentle flame
That made you once ſo bleſt:
Remember ſtill it burns the ſame
Within his faithful breaſt. [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

CLEONICE, ALCESTES.

*Cleo.* Alceſtes, O! how different is the taſk
To form reſolves and to complete our purpoſe!
Remote from thee, I deem'd the conqueſt eaſy,
And love to glory ſeem'd to yield the prize:
Yet when I find myſelf of thee depriv'd,
My heart enfeebled loſes all its firmneſs;
And glory, O ye powers! ſubmits to love.

*Alc.* What would'ſt thou therefore tell me?

*Cleo.* That without thee
I cannot live; that ſince my ſtars forbid me,
To enjoy at once Alceſtes and the crown,
The crown be left, and not Alceſtes loſt.

*Alc.* What doſt thou mean?

*Cleo.* No longer on theſe ſhores
fits us to remain: with thee I'll fly

To

To breathe in other climes a happier air.

*Alc.* Ha! fly with me! but where?——No,
Cleonice;
Had I the deeds of anceſtors to trace;
O! could I boaſt of ſubjects and a throne,
I might perhaps be led to accept the proofs
Thy generous love would give: but all the kingdom
And ſubjects niggard fate to me affords,
Are ſome few flocks, and a poor ſimple cottage.

*Cleo.* Yet in that cottage ſhall I feel the peace
Which in a ſtately palace, far from thee,
My breaſt muſt never find. No guards indeed
Will watch me whilſt I ſleep; but in return
Jealous ſuſpicions never will diſturb
My calm unbroken reſt: though precious viands,
In coſtly gold, deck not our homely board,
Yet from the bending boughs my hand ſhall pluck
The ripen'd fruit, where lurks no deadly juice
To chill my veins with unexpected death.
I'll wander o'er the hills and meads, but ſtill
Alceſtes at my ſide: my feet ſhall trace
The foreſt gloom, but ſtill Alceſtes with me:
Each ſun that ſets ſhall leave me with Alceſtes;
And when again he riſes in the eaſt
To gild the morn, ſhall find me ſtill with thee.

*Alc.* O! Cleonice moſt ador'd! amidſt
Theſe ſcenes of happineſs, the pleaſing dreams
Of one whoſe ſoul o'erflows with love's exceſs,
I read the goodneſs of thy generous heart:

Yet theſe, alas! are only vain illuſions
Sprung from the warmth of paſſion——

*Cleo.* Vain illuſions!
Doſt thou believe me then incapable
To quit the throne?

*Alc.* And can you think that ever
Alceſtes will permit it?——No, my queen,
You ſhould have then conceal'd your virtues more,
And made me leſs enamour'd of your glory.
Great ſouls were never form'd to live retir'd
In calm inactive reſt. Shall I defraud
All Aſia of the long-expected peace,
Which, in the tumults of our troubled ſtate,
Your conſtancy and wiſdom muſt beſtow?
Let us not, Cleonice, loſe the fruit
Of all our tears and anguiſh: thy example
Taught me this pure affection——Yes, my life,
Who would not ſuffer in ſo bright a cauſe?
The ſtory of our loves remoteſt times
Shall learn, and with our loves our fortitude.
If we're deny'd to lead our days together
In mutual happineſs, at leaſt our names
Shall live conjoin'd, and ſhare one common glory.

*Cleo.* And wherefore is not here all Aſia met,
That, hearing thee, they might excuſe the paſſion
Which once in Cleonice they condemn'd?
But now I falter'd; thou, my dear Alceſtes,
Haſt ſtrengthen'd my reſolves, and from thy words
The virtue they excite receives more charms.

Go then——but firſt in me behold th' effects
Of fortitude like thine: yes, thou ſhalt ſee
How I can imitate thy great example.
Come, let us to the palace; there, Alceſtes,
Shalt thou be told the conſort I will chooſe:
Thou ſhalt be preſent at the royal nuptials.

*Alc.* It muſt not be—you put my conſtancy
To too ſevere a proof.

*Cleo.* No——let us try
To emulate each other in our ſufferings.

*Alc.* O Heaven! thou little know'ſt what cruel anguiſh
The conſtant lover feels, who pines with envy
To ſee another bleſt in the poſſeſſion
Of what himſelf muſt never hope to enjoy.

*Cleo.* I ſee full well the deep diſtreſs
Which jealous hearts endure;
But ſince I ſtill conſult thy peace,
In me confide ſecure.

Yes, when I leave thee thou ſhalt know
What thoughts my boſom move:
And while I faithleſs ſeem, I'll ſhow
The ſtrongeſt proof of love. [*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

ALCESTES *alone.*

What mean theſe myſtic words of Cleonice?
She bids me yield her to another's arms,
Yet tells me that ſhe ſtill conſults my peace.
This is to bid me die ere I depart:
But let her be obey'd; for her I'm ready
To ſuffer every pang the mind can feel;
Nor will I queſtion aught that ſhe commands.

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* OLINTHUS.

*Olin.* Once more thou art alone, and nothing now
Remains that can oppoſe thy going hence;
Permit Olinthus thus, in pledge of friendſhip,
To take this laſt embrace.

*Alc.* Thy noble nature
With generous goodneſs honours my departure,
But know I ſhall not leave thee yet.

*Olin.* What ſay'ſt thou?
Speak——wherefore?

*Alc.* 'Tis the queen's command.

*Olin.* Each moment
Thy purpoſe changes.

*Alc.*

*Alc.* 'Tis my ſovereign's will,
And what ſhe wills Alceſtes muſt obey.

*Olin.* What next would Cleonice? Does ſhe purpoſe
To elect thee for our king?

*Alc.* To ſuch a height
My hopes aſpire not.

*Olin.* Would ſhe have thee preſent
At theſe new nuptials? O! 'twere moſt inhuman,
Nor ought you to conſent.

*Alc.* Thou art deceiv'd:
Whate'er my fate I will endure it all;
And call that happineſs which ſhe beſtows.

Thoſe lovely lips I ſtill adore,
Whate'er the doom they give;
Whether by hope, they life reſtore,
Or bid me ceaſe to live.

But little can the lover prove,
Of beauty's ſovereign ſway,
Who the dear object of his love
Refuſes to obey. [*Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

OLINTHUS *alone.*

This I foreſaw; 'twas but a ſeeming virtue
Incited Cleonice to appeaſe

The

The people's clamours, while ſhe for herſelf
And her Alceſtes would ſecure the throne.
I am but little fear'd——the rigid curb
Of a ſtern father, that reſtrains his ſon,
Gives ſanction to their raſhneſs. Could I once
Shake off this ſervile yoke, we ſoon ſhould ſee
A change of fortune; yes, Olinthus then
Might o'er his rival boaſt a full revenge.

The lion, long a priſoner held,
To bear the ſervile bonds compell'd,
Appears with native ſtrength no more:
Yet if by chance he burſt his chain,
His former rage awakes again,
And he that durſt but late aſſail
The generous beaſt, with terror pale
Now trembles at his roar. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IX.

*The apartments of* PHENICIUS *in the palace.*

PHENICIUS *alone.*

How are my thoughts confounded! Cleonice
Enjoins me to return to my apartment,
And bids me here await her high command.
When I, impatient, aſk'd her of Alceſtes,
Her anſwer was, "Alceſtes yet departs not."
What can this ſecret be, which thus the queen
Againſt

Againſt her cuſtom has from me conceal'd?
Alas! I fear that all my former cares
Were ſpent in vain.

## SCENE X.

*Enter* MITHRANES.

*Mith.* Be comforted, my lord,
The Cretan forces now are near the port;
I from the ſummit of the palace, view'd
The billows whitening with a thouſand prows.

*Phen.* Behold, my friend, the aid we long deſir'd:
At laſt to Syria's ſons we may reveal
The lawful ſucceſſor. Find out Alceſtes;
Conduct him to me. Of thy truſty friends
Select whate'er thou canſt—Yes, dear Mithranes,
I now require the laſt, the greateſt proof
Of thy fidelity.

*Mith.* I fly this inſtant
To execute your will.

*Phen.* But hear, Mithranes,
Proceed with caution, and conceal the cauſe
For which the numerous force——

## SCENE XI.

*Enter* OLINTHUS.

*Olin.* Great news, my father,
I bring.

*Phen.* What tidings bring'ſt thou?

*Olin.* Cleonice
At length has fix'd her choice.

*Phen.* And nam'd Alceſtes?

*Olin.* If thus Alceſtes hop'd, he hop'd in vain.

*Phen.* What ſtrange, what unexpected ſtroke is this?

## SCENE XII.

*Enter* ALCESTES *with two attendants bearing the crown and royal mantle.*

*Alc.* Low at your feet, permit me— [*kneels.*

*Phen.* Heavens!—Alceſtes,
What can this mean?

*Alc.* Thou art our king, Phenicius.

*Phen.* Your king!——O riſe!

*Alc.* The virtuous Cleonice
By me has ſent theſe enſigns of dominion:
She waits till you, my lord, adorn'd with theſe,
Shall

Shall meet her in the temple, there to join
Your hand with hers: you cannot ſure reject
The glorious preſent which Alceſtes brings:
I know alike are by Phenicius priz'd
The ambaſſador, the giver, and the gift.

*Phen.* Does not the queen reflect how far unequal
Phenicius' age to hers?

*Alc.* The queen reflects
That in another never can ſhe find
More loyal faith, and more conſummate wiſdom.
Th' exalted fair, by chooſing thus, avoids
A thouſand evils: ſhe rewards your worth,
Prevents the tongue of calumny, provides
For Syria's welfare, and deludes in many
A fond ambitious hope.

*Mith.* And calms in part
The jealous tempeſt which diſtreſs'd Alceſtes
May feel within his breaſt.

*Phen.* [*aſide.*] For this event,
And this alone my ſoul was unprepar'd.

*Olin.* Each is impatient to behold his king:
My father, haſte: content your longing friends,
The eager populace, and all Seleucia
Enraptur'd with the choice.

*Phen.* Proceed, Olinthus,
Before me to the temple; ſay that ſoon
They ſhall behold their king—with me behind

Remain awhile Mithranes and Alceſtes.

*Olin.* [*aſide.*] Let not Alceſtes gain the queen or throne,
And I am ſatisfied. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XIII.

PHENICIUS, MITHRANES, ALCESTES.

*Phen.* Propitious powers!
I never hop'd ſo much from your indulgence;
Moſt bleſt event of all my cares and toils!
Alceſtes, thou no more muſt call me father;
No longer by th' endearing name of ſon,
Muſt thou be preſs'd within theſe aged arms:
Theſe are the laſt embraces I muſt give thee.
[*embraces him.*

*Alc.* What crime of mine can forfeit ſuch a bleſſing?

*Phen.* I am your ſubject—you are Syria's king.
[*kneels.*

*Alc.* O riſe!——what haſt thou ſaid?

*Mith.* Tranſcendent faith!

*Phen.* At length know who you are; in you ſtill breathes
The offspring of Demetrius; you in Alceſtes
Survives the undoubted heir of Syria's throne.
I have preſerv'd you for this happy day:
If you diſtruſt my truth, believe yourſelf,

Your princely genius, your exalted ſoul;
Believe Phenicius who rejects for you
A profferr'd crown: believe theſe tears of joy
That trickle down my cheek.

*Alc.* But wherefore, ſir,
Have you ſo long conceal'd my fortune from me?

*Phen.* You ſhall know all, give me a moment's reſpite:
My heart, o'ercharg'd with ſuch a tide of pleaſure,
Scarce gives the vital functions leave to play.

Immortal powers! from you no more
My loyal faith her meed deſires:
My truth is crown'd, my toils are o'er,
My prince no more my zeal requires.

I fear not now the frowns of fate,
No happier fortune wiſh to find;
But calmly death's approach I wait,
Nor death's approach can damp my mind.

[*Exit with attendants.*

## SCENE XIV.

ALCESTES, MITHRANES.

*Alc.* Do I then dream or wake?

*Mith.* Permit Mithranes,
As the firſt homage of a faithful ſubject— [*kneels.*

*Alc.*

*Alc.* My beſt Mithranes, yet awhile forbear;
Leave me in peace, for ſtill my ſoul's in doubt.

*Mith.* Hence be every thought diſtreſt;
Fairer proſpects fill your breaſt:
Fortune brings a happier hour,
Seize the occaſion in your power:
'Tis time at length to breathe from pain.
Through life accuſtom'd ſtill to bear
The ſting of grief, and pining care,
Though lodg'd in port, you yet deſpair,
And dread the perils of the main. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XV.

ALCESTES *alone.*

Can it be poſſible? Am I Demetrius,
Heir to Seleucia's crown? And have I been
Even to myſelf till now ſo little known?
What changes have I ſeen? In one ſhort day
Behold me here a monarch and a ſhepherd,
An exile and a huſband. Who, Alceſtes,
Can yet enſure thee that malicious fortune
May not once more transform thee to a ſhepherd?

SCENE

## SCENE XVI.

*Enter* BARSENE.

*Bar.* Phenicius is our ſovereign?

*Alc.* Cleonice
Has fix'd on him to fill Seleucia's throne.

*Bar.* Alceſtes, I compaſſionate your loſs;
But ſince your hopes to eſpouſe the queen are vain,
No longer I deſpair to find your heart
Admit Barſene's love.

*Alc.* Barſene's love!

*Bar.* 'Till now reſpectful I conceal'd my flame:
A throne and queen were rivals far too mighty
For poor Barſene; but at length I ſee
Phenicius king, and Cleonice wedded;
Your hopes extinct: a more propitious hour
I ne'er could chooſe to tell you that I love.

*Alc.* Ill haſt thou fix'd thy choice, unhappy maid!

Could'ſt thou, Barſene, but diſcern
What thoughts this boſom move,
Thy lips might other accents learn,
And never ſpeak of love.

Lament

Lament not then that in your pain
I bear ſo little part,
For while your words my feet detain,
Far diſtant is my heart. [*Exit.*

## SCENE XVII.

BARSENE *alone.*

And wherefore did I not continue ſilent?
Alas! I hop'd at leaſt by my confeſſion
Alceſtes might have felt a kindred flame;
That little hope is now for ever loſt,
Alceſtes knows my paſſion, and contemns it.

While the harmleſs turtle-dove
Sees not where the danger lies,
To 'ſcape the falcon from above,
To the fowler's hand ſhe flies.

Thus I, who ſought to ſhun the pain
Of ſmother'd grief and love conceal'd,
Muſt every ſhame and woe ſuſtain,
Which proffer'd love, refus'd, can yield.
[*Exit.*

SCENE

## SCENE XVIII.

*A ſtately temple dedicated to the Sun: an altar, an image of the Sun in the middle, and a throne on one ſide.*

CLEONICE *attended,* PHENICIUS *accompanied by two nobles, bearing the royal mantle, crown and ſceptre.*

*Phen.* Believe me, I deceive you not, Alceſtes
Is rightful heir of Syria; and to him
Belong theſe royal enſigns.

*Cleo.* In his looks
Methought I trac'd a ſoul above the vulgar,
That ſpoke a kingly race.

*Phen.* I know my care
To cheriſh thus a foe was criminal:
But yet the merits of ſo dear a foe,
And my refuſal to accept a crown,
At once muſt plead excuſe, and ſeal my pardon.

*Cleo.* What ſtrange events has fate this day produc'd!
When I believ'd myſelf of peace depriv'd—

*Phen.* Demetrius comes.

[*They advance to meet* Alceſtes.

SCENE

## SCENE XIX.

*Enter* ALCESTES, MITHRANES *and Guards.*

*Alc.* And have I found at length
This firſt, this happy time when I may ſee thee,
Nor fear that thou wilt bluſh to own our paſſion.
Of all the bleſſings royalty may yield,
This is the greateſt that Alceſtes ever
Can find upon the throne.

*Cleo.* Let us, my lord,
Exchange our fortune: you are now the king,
And I the ſubject; every doubt that late
Your breaſt divided, paſſes now to mine.
Demetrius, go——behold the regal ſeat
Your anceſtors have preſs'd—even with that pleaſure
I once would have beſtow'd it on Alceſtes,
I now reſtore it to him. May you long
Poſſeſs it happier far than I have done.
E'er ſince I knew it, barren has it prov'd
Of all content to me, and only now
I loſe it, do I find it gives me joy.

*Mith.* Exalted virtue!

*Alc.* I will mount the throne,
But 'tis your hand ſhall guide me; and this hand
Reward my truth.

*Cleo.* So grateful a command

Takes from my heart the merit of obedience.

[*they approach the altar, and join hands,*

*Phen.* O! how exceſs of tranſport fills my ſoul!

*Alc.* } Hail! powerful God! indulgent prove,
*Cleo.* } And ſhine propitious on our love!

*Alc.* Like me a lover have you been,
And on the turfy ſhore,
Where fam'd Theſſalia's ſtream is ſeen,
A ſhepherd's likeneſs wore.

*Cleo.* My conſtant faith was taught by you;
Whoſe breaſt unchang'd remains;
And to your laurel ever true,
Its ancient flame retains.

*Alc.* } Hail! powerful God! indulgent prove,
*Cleo.* } And ſhine propitious on our love!

*Phen.* Heaven thunders to the left.

## SCENE XX.

*Enter* BARSENE.

*Bar.* O queen! Seleucia
Is all in tumult.

*Cleo.* Wherefore?

*Bar.* Know the envoy
Is now arriv'd from Crete, and with him brings
A hundred ſhips.

*Cleo.*

*Cleo.* 'Tis well, he ſhall be heard.

*Bar.* But raſh Olinthus, whoſe impatient pride
Can never brook Alceſtes on the throne,
Has join'd the ambaſſador, and 'midſt the people
Proclaims aloud Phenicius has deceiv'd them,
Declares that he can prove his ſaying juſt,
And that to him is known the true Demetrius.

*Cleo.* Alas! Phenicius.

*Phen.* Baniſh every fear,
And with ſecurity aſcend the throne:
It ſhall be ſeen on which ſide falſehood lies.

## SCENE LAST.

*Enter* OLINTHUS *with a paper ſealed in his hand, and the* CRETAN *Ambaſſador, with a train of* GREEKS.

*Olin.* Stay your raſh ſteps, forbear.
[*to* Cleonice *and* Alceſtes, *as they advance towards the throne.*
No longer Heaven
Permits deceit to flouriſh. In this paper
Will be reveal'd the heir of dead Demetrius;
This paper written by our king Demetrius
Before his death, while in the land of Crete
He liv'd an exile: with the royal ſignet
Behold it ſeal'd: this Cretan ſaw him ſign it;
[*points to the ambaſſador.*
He

He brings it hither by the ſtate's decree,
And with him brings the united force of Crete,
To aſſert the honours of the royal blood.

*Cleo.* O heavenly powers!

*Phen.* Olinthus, read the ſecret.

*Olin.* Alceſtes now muſt end his towering pride.
[*opens the paper and reads.*

" People of Syria, learn that 'midſt you lives
" My ſon conceal'd; a future day will come
" To make him known: if by no other token
" He ſtand diſcover'd, know in feign'd Alceſtes
" Phenicius educates his youth.
Demetrius."

*Cleo.* My life returns.

*Phen.* Olinthus, thy confuſion
Phenicius well foreſaw.

*Olin.* I am all amazement!

*Mith.* How is his raſhneſs damp'd! [*aſide.*

*Olin.* My lord, in you
I own my ſovereign, and repent my folly.
[*to* Alceſtes.

*Alc.* Olinthus, I remember nothing now
But that thou art the ſon of my Phenicius.

*Phen.* Permit me once to view you on the throne;
My vows are then complete.

*Alc.* Whate'er I have

Is

Is but the gift of your fidelity;
This from Alceſtes' lips the world ſhall learn.

*Phen.* And from your virtues ſhall the world be taught,
That in one heart may love and glory reign.

[Alceſtes *and* Cleonice *aſcend the throne.*

CHORUS.

Love that to noble breaſts extends,
Is not a rival to control
Fair virtue's ſway; but, mutual friends,
To generous deeds they raiſe the ſoul.

Reſt happy pair in peace ſecure;
Henceforth may every favouring power
To you that happineſs enſure,
Which Heaven averſe denied before.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

THE

# THE DREAM OF SCIPIO.

## SPEAKERS.

SCIPIO.

CONSTANCY.

FORTUNE.

PUBLIUS.

EMILIUS, Father of SCIPIO.

CHORUS of HEROES.

The action ſuppoſed to be in Africa, in the Palace of MASINISSA.

# THE DREAM OF SCIPIO.

SCIPIO aſleep, CONSTANCY, FORTUNE.

*Fort.* Come, mighty offspring of Emilius, come,
Purſue my ſteps.

*Conſ.* O! Scipio! come and follow
My better track.

*Scip.* Who dares diſturb my reſt?

*Fort.* 'Tis I.

*Conſ.* 'Tis I: appeaſe thy ill-tim'd anger.

*Fort.* Turn, turn to me.

*Conſ.* Behold my features.

*Scip.* Gods!
What blaze of light! What harmony unknown!
What forms are theſe ſo ſplendid and ſo fair!
Where am I?—Who are you?

*Conſ.* The nurſe of heroes.

*Fort.* The great diſpenſer I of every good
The univerſe can yield.

*Conſ.* I am CONSTANCY.

*Fort.* And FORTUNE I.

*Scip.* But wherefore ſeek ye me?

*Conſ.* That thou, O! Scipio, may'ſt between
us chooſe
Thy partner through the rugged paths of life.

*Fort.* We promiſe both to make thee bleſt.

*Conſ.* Decide:
To her or me intruſt thy future guidance.

*Scip.* I know not what to anſwer.

*Fort.* Doſt thou doubt?

*Conſ.* Canſt thou one moment pauſe?

*Fort.* My lock invites thee;
And wilt thou not to me conſign thy days?

*Conſ.* Hear'ſt thou my name and com'ſt not?

*Fort.* Speak.

*Conſ.* Reſolve.

*Scip.* What ſhall I anſwer? If I muſt reſolve,
One moment give to commune with myſelf.
Where am I? Say, what power has hither brought
me?
If all I ſee be truth, or but a dream,
If yet I wake, or fancy but deceive me?

While round this wondrous ſcene I gaze,
My ſoul, bewilder'd with amaze,
On nothing yet reſolves.
The heart in mingled paſſions loſt,
As by a troubled ocean toſt,
A thouſand thoughts revolves.

*Conſ.*

*Conſ.* Well haſt thou ſaid. Converſe with each apart,
And learn whate'er thou ſeekeſt.

*Fort.* Scipio, yes:
But brief be thy demands: I cannot bear
A long delay; for, varying ſtill, I ſhift
With every moment my purſuit and place.

Unſtable as the wind am I,
With looks that change and feet that fly:
With anger now I burn, and now
The ſmiles of pleaſure ſmooth my brow.
Sometimes I take delight awhile,
To raiſe from earth the ruin'd pile;
And ſoon an equal zeal employ
My recent labour to deſtroy.

*Scip.* Where am I then? In Maſiniſſa's palace,
Where but even now I clos'd my eyes in ſleep?
It cannot be.

*Conſ.* No, Africa is far,
Far diſtant from us. Scipio, thou art plac'd
In Heaven's unmeaſur'd temple.

*Fort.* Doſt thou not
Confeſs it by the numerous ſtars that blaze
With glories round thee? By the unwonted ſound
Of whirling ſpheres in rapturous minſtrelſy?
By this celeſtial orb of living ſapphire
In which they roll?

*Scip.* O! ſay, amidſt the ſpheres
What makes this ſymphony?

*Conſ.* The ſame that makes
With them proportion'd inequality
Of meaſure and of motion: in their courſe
They circling meet, and each returns a ſound
Diſtinct from each, while all together form
One perfect concord. On the mortal lyre
The ſtrings, attemper'd thus by hand and ear,
Emit ſweet harmony. This magic force,
This ſecret rule that makes unlike agree,
Is call'd proportion, univerſal law
Of all created things; myſterious ray
Of higheſt wiſdom, which the Samian* ſage
In ſacred numbers taught.

*Scip.* But wherefore fails
Such powerful melody to ſtrike the ſenſe
Of human organs? Why unheard by thoſe
In our terreſtrial dwelling?

*Conſ.* Strains like theſe
Confound the faculties of earthly ſenſe.

Thoſe eyes that ſeek the noon-day ſun,
Soon looſe their dazzled ſight:
The nerves oppreſs'd and weaken'd, ſhun
Th' exceſſive blaze of light.

* Pythagoras.

The

The ſimple hind, who near reſides
Where falling Nilus roars,
Hears not the ruſh of foaming tides
That ſhake the deafen'd ſhores.

*Scip.* Say, what inhabitants——

*Fort.* No further queſtion,
But make at length thy choice.

*Scip.* Indulgent yet
Say, who reſide in theſe ſupernal ſeats?

*Conſ.* Numbers are here, of various virtues, fram'd
To various parts.

*Scip.* But who their dwelling find
Where now we meet?

*Fort.* Behold who come to inſtruct thee.

SCIPIO, CONSTANCY, FORTUNE, PUBLIUS, *Chorus of Heroes and* EMILIUS.

CHORUS.

From heroes ſprung, by fate beſtow'd
To give to Rome her earlieſt fame,
O! welcome to this bright abode:
No ſtrangers we to Scipio's name.

A thouſand

A thouſand glorious footſteps view:
Lo! here thy great forefathers trace,
And through each ſhining path purſue
The deeds of thy illuſtrious race.

*Scip.* Ye powers! am I deceiv'd, or do theſe eyes
Behold my great progenitor, who bow'd
Rebellious Afric to the yoke of Rome?

*Pub.* Doubt not; 'tis I.

*Scip.* My ſoul is chill'd with awe!
Are then the dead——

*Pub.* Scipio, thou err'ſt, for know
That Publius is not dead.

*Scip.* Yet ſure conſum'd
To nameleſs aſhes, midſt the funeral pile,
Long ſince has Rome bewail'd thee.

*Pub.* Ceaſe, O! ceaſe;
Thou little know'ſt thyſelf. Believ'ſt thou then
That hand, thoſe features and thoſe limbs, that form
The outward man are Scipio? Thou 'rt deceiv'd—
They are but veſtments—learn, the immortal ſenſe,
By which alone we think, conceive and live;
THAT has no parts, and cannot be diſſolv'd.
THAT leſſens not its power by length of years,
THAT, THAT is Scipio, and can never die.
Hard were indeed the deſtiny of virtue,

If

If nothing of us liv'd beyond the tomb;
And if indeed we knew no other good
Than what on earth the wicked chiefly ſhare.
No, Scipio, no—the PERFECT CAUSE of all
Is ever juſt, beyond the funeral pile
We ſtill have other hopes. Theſe glorious ſeats
Of light eternal are our great reward;
And faireſt of them this, where dwells with me
Whoe'er on earth has lov'd his native land;
Whoe'er for public good has clos'd his days,
And for another's ſake his blood effus'd.

If here thy hopes ſome future day
Would find a happy ſeat,
Thy great forefathers' deeds ſurvey,
Nor Publius' name forget.

By him, who meets like us his death,
Here endleſs life is known:
He merits not his natal breath,
Who lives but for himſelf alone.

*Scip.* As heroes then reſide——

*Fort.* If ſtill thy doubts
Are unreſolv'd, my patience, Scipio, fails—
Decide—decide.

*Conſ.* Let him demand at full:
Since what he learns will teach him beſt to fix
Between our claims.

*Scip.* As heroes then reſide

In theſe bleſt regions, wherefore ſees not Scipio
His warlike father?

*Pub.* Doſt thou not behold him
There full reveal'd to ſight?

*Scip.* 'Tis true, 'tis true,
Forgive me, mighty father! I have err'd,
But 'twas the error of my dazzled eyes,
I ſaw thee not: I err'd not in my mind;
There ever dwells thy image—Thou art HE.
Already in thy well-known form I trace
Paternal majeſty. I gaze upon thee,
And my heart beats with love and filial duty.
Indulgent Gods! O! father moſt belov'd,
O! happy day!—but doſt thou calmly thus
Receive thy ſon? Serene, thy features ſhow
No fond emotion. Feel'ſt thou not, my father,
To ſee me here, a joy that equals mine?

*Emil.* The joy, my ſon, which heavenly boſoms feel
Oppreſſes not like yours, and yet is more.

*Scip.* I am rapt beyond myſelf—all, all is wonder!
My every ſenſe is loſt!

*Emil.* Thou canſt not quit
The falſe ideas of the world below,
Though now ſo far remote. Caſt down thine eye,
Look there, behold enclos'd with murky clouds,
Yon little globe, yon ſcarce-diſtinguiſh'd ſpot.

*Scip.*

*Scip.* Ye powers!—can that be earth?

*Emil.* Thy earth is there.

*Scip.* All its huge foreſts, all its rapid floods;
Its mighty provinces, contending realms,
With every countleſs nation—Tyber—Rome?

*Emil.* All in that ſpot compris'd.

*Scip.* O! ſire belov'd!
How vain, how nothing to my ſight appears
The wretched theatre of human pride!

*Emil.* Ah! could'ſt thou on that theatre, my ſon,
Obſerve the actors; ſee their follies, dreams,
Their falſe purſuits; and every cauſe that here
Claims juſt deriſion, there exciting rage,
And grief and joy and love—How wretched then
To thee would ſeem the boaſts of human-kind.

You hapleſs mortals, ſmile below
To mark the puling infant's woe;
And mock the little tears that flow
For every trivial ill.
No leſs above we ſmile to view
Man's ripen'd age ſuch toys purſue,
And even with locks of ſilver hue,
Be helpleſs children ſtill.

*Scip.* O! Publius! O! my father! let me here
With you reſide. I gladly will forſake

That

That feat of human wretchedneſs below.

*Fort.* It is not yet allow'd.

*Conſ.* It cannot be.

*Pub.* Thou yet muſt live and long.

*Scip.* I've liv'd enough,
Enough for Scipio.

*Emil.* Yes; but not enough
For Fate's deſigns, or for the weal of Rome,
For earth and Heaven.

*Pub.* Much haſt thou done already,
But more remains to do. 'Tis not in vain
That Scipio boaſts the honours of his race,
His lineal wreaths; and not by chance the plains
Of fair Iberia own'd thy youthful toils.
Think not thou bear'ſt in vain the glorious name
Fatal to Africa. The taſk was mine
To lay the yoke on ſuch a potent foe,
But thine is to deſtroy him—Go—meantime
Prepare no leſs for ſufferings than for triumph;
Both furniſh palms for Virtue. Deſtiny
May ſhake, but not ſubdue her: when ſhe ſtrives
With adverſe days ſhe ſhines with nobler fame.

High-

High-ſeated on the mountain's brow
An aged oak, when tempeſts blow,
Secure the bluſtering rage ſuſtains:
His leaves in winter ſcatter'd round,
With firmer root he ſtrikes the ground,
And loſing beauty ſtrength he gains.

*Scip.* Since all were vain to oppoſe the will of Fate,
I yield to her decree.

*Conſ.* Now, Scipio, time
Demands thy choice.

*Fort.* Thou need'ſt no further learn,
But well canſt judge between us.

*Scip.* 'Tis requir'd,
O! Publius, that of theſe contending powers—

*Pub.* I know it all—act as thou wilt.

*Scip.* My father,
O! give me counſel.

*Emil.* No; my counſel, ſon,
From thee would take the glory of thy choice.

*Fort.* If thou would'ſt wiſh for happineſs, beware
Thou dallieſt not with Fortune—Scipio, ſeize
The moment when my lock invites thy hand.

*Scip.* But tell me, thou that urgeſt thus thy claim,

Why

Why ſhould I follow thee, and why prefer
Thy ſteps before thy rival's?

*Fort.* What attempt,
Without my aid, can e'er with man ſucceed?
Know'ſt thou my power? I am arbitreſs below
Of every good or ill: behold the hand,
That ſcatters, at my pleaſure, grief or joy,
Diſgrace or honours, poverty or wealth.
Lo! I am SHE that builds, deſtroys, renews
The mightieſt empires. I, at will, can change
A cottage to a throne; and, at my nod,
A throne becomes a cottage. In the ſky
Whirlwinds are mine, and tempeſts on the ſea.
I rule the fate of armies: at my ſmile
Defeat becomes a gain, and palms ariſe
From battles loſt; and when diſpleas'd, I rend
The promis'd laurel from the victor's hand,
Even on the edge of conqueſt. Would'ſt thou more?
Virtue and valour both confeſs my ſway.
When FORTUNE wills the vileſt ſeems moſt bold,
And bold the vileſt. In deſpite of juſtice,
Guilt ſtands abſolv'd, and innocence is guilty.

To him I view with favouring ſight,
Like day appears the gloomy night:
For him, when winter binds the plain,
Earth gives to ſpring the golden grain.

But

But when on one, in evil hour,
The angry eyes of FORTUNE lour;
To him the wood its ſhade denies;
No waves for him the ſea ſupplies.

*Scip.* And is there nothing then on earth to oppoſe
To ſuch tremendous power?

*Conſ.* Yes—CONSTANCY.
Know, Scipio, I, and I alone, preſcribe
The law and limits to her dreaded reign.
Where'er I am ſhe never can extend
Her mutable dominion. In my preſence
Her beſt of gifts will never boaſt a charm,
Nor ſhall her threats have terror. Virtue, valour,
Perchance from her may ſuffer wrong; but Time,
My great avenger, will at length aſſign
To every deed its merit.—Not in HER,
In ME, O! Scipio, the preſerver view
Of ſtates and empires: this thy anceſtors,
And this thy Rome experienc'd. Preſs'd indeed
By Brennus, in Tarpeias' rocky ſtraits,
The Latian freedom ſhook, but could not fall.
'Tis true, that on the banks of Aufidus
The Roman conſul ſaw his warrior-youth
All periſh by the ſword; but ſcorn'd himſelf
To ſink in blank deſpair. To gain the palms,
The lateſt palms from Rome, with all his hoſt
Of countleſs ſtandards, Annibal o'erſhades

The

The Roman ſoil, but finds that ſoil a grave
To all the victor's hopes. Such deeds are mine,
And ſuch as FORTUNE never can reſiſt.
She, wearied ſoon, a different aſpect wears;
And in her own deſpite becomes my ſlave.

The rock, with foamy billows white,
Seems ſinking down the tumbling tide,
While ſoaring o'er its topmoſt height,
The waters gain on every ſide.

But proudly batter'd round in vain
Its ſtately head the tempeſt braves,
Till ſmooth'd to calms, the placid main
Creeps round its foot with lambent waves.

*Scip.* No more—celeſtial CONSTANCY, 'tis thine:
Lead where thou wilt, I aſk no other guide;
I follow thee.

*Fort.* Are then my gifts deſpis'd?

*Scip.* I ſeek not, nor refuſe them.

*Fort.* And my rage?

*Scip.* I not defy, nor fear it.

*Fort.* Scipio, think;
Thou may'ſt in vain repent—look well upon me—
Reflect, and then reſolve.

*Scip.* I am reſolv'd.

Go,

Go, boaſt an undiſputed ſway,
That all mankind thy rule obey;
Yet think not hence in chains to bind
A noble heart, a virtuous mind,
That neither fear nor baſeneſs knows.
Let abject ſouls thy influence own,
And bend before thy tyrant-throne;
Such ſouls as godlike gifts deſpiſe,
And only ſordid merit prize,
Such merit as thy ſmile beſtows.

*Fort.* Is there a mortal then that dares deny
To me his vows, and ſlight my profferr'd grace?

*Scip.* Yes—I am HE.

*Fort.* 'Tis well—prepare to prove
My hoſtile fury—Come, diſaſters dire,
Adventures horrible! Ye miniſters
Of my reſentment—cruſh this daring rebel,
To you conſign'd, and doom'd to every woe.

*Scip.* Ye powers! what can this mean! what ſanguine gleam!
What clouds and ſtorms! What darkneſs gathers round!
And hark! reſounding through the affrighted ſpheres
What horrid craſh! A hundred forky bolts
Hiſs o'er my head, while yon ethereal vault
Seems tumbling into chaos!—But the ſoul

Of

Of Scipio knows not fear—In vain your threats,
Inſulting FORTUNE! Goddeſs ſtill unjuſt,
Perfidious power!—But hold, what voice awakes
My ſlumbering ſenſe? Where am I? This is ſure
The abode of Maſiniſſa—where is Publius?
My father, where? The heavens, and ſtarry ſpheres
All vaniſh'd, and theſe wonders but a dream!
Yet this at leaſt is real—CONSTANCY
Still dwells with Scipio—in my breaſt I feel
Her ſacred influence—friendly Gods! I own
Your favouring grace—auſpicious omen, hail!

THE END OF SCIPIO'S DREAM.

## CANTATAS.

# CANTATAS.

# CANTATAS.

## THE EXCUSE.

FORGIVE me, yet I know not whence
Unjuſtly thus my Chloris takes offence.
What have I ſaid, my fair?
My hapleſs error now declare.
I ſaid, I LOVE THEE, deareſt maid,
THOU ART MY SOUL'S DELIGHT, I ſaid,
If this diſpleaſe, ah! tell me why?—
Is this a crime of deepeſt dye?
If love of thee be guilt, then he alone
Is innocent, who ne'er has Chloris known.

Name, Chloris, one, of all the ſwains,
Who ſpeaks to thee and breathes not love,
Who ſees thee, yet eſcapes thy chains;
Then, if thou canſt, my flame reprove.

But why, when numbers thus offend,
Muſt I beneath thy ſentence pine?
If Chloris' charms her ſex tranſcend,
Ah! cruel nymph, no blame is mine.

Be now appeas'd, reſume each winning grace,
Thou know'ſt not how a frown deforms that lovely face,
Ah! truſt not me,
But bending ſee
In yonder fountain—Told I true
What there, alas! does Chloris view?
That clouded brow, that haughty air,
Have chang'd thoſe features, late ſo fair:
But would'ſt thou make thine anger known,
A better vengeance is thine own.
If 'tis a fault to ſay, "I LIVE
TO LOVE BUT THEE, MY SOUL'S DELIGHT!"
Thou may'ſt with eaſe ſuch wrong requite,
Retort the offence on me, and I'll the offence forgive.
I'll patient hear my Chloris tell——
And doſt thou ſmile?—Enchanting ſpell!
That ſteals me from myſelf away.
Haſte, Chloris, in the ſtream ſurvey
What wonders now thy looks diſplay.
If thus a ſmile can love's ſoft power renew,
Ah! what, my fair, would gentle pity do?
I own that Beauty, when ſhe ſmiles,
With magic every care beguiles;
But Beauty, when ſhe heals the heart that bleeds,
Aſſumes a charm that every charm exceeds.

To yon clear fount again repair,
Again thy features trace;
But let compaſſion now, my fair,
Give every feature grace.

A thouſand charms, unknown before,
Thy perſon ſhall adorn;
Nor thoſe bright eyes ſhall ever more
Be arm'd with cruel ſcorn.

THE

## THE ADVICE.

HEAR, Thyrſis, and in friendſhip hear,
The counſel of a friend ſincere:
I pity now thy dangerous ſtate,
And tremble for thy near-impending fate.
Say, who could thus my friend adviſe
On Nyſa's face to fix his eyes?
Ah! hapleſs youth, in time beware,
Thou ſoon wilt fall into her ſnare.
Nyſa has each alluring art
(Too well I know,) that wins the heart:
In every look has Nyſa charms,
With every look each boſom warms;
Yet none can tell the cauſe that kindles theſe alarms:
Each nymph in vain, like her, ſuch triumph ſeeks to prove;
But ah! thou little know'ſt her tyrant ſway in love.

I know it well: the fatal hour,
When firſt I view'd thoſe piercing eyes,
Subdu'd my heart to Beauty's power,
And heav'd my breaſt with endleſs ſighs.

I know it well—nor leſs have known
The ſhady vales and foreſts drear,
That oft have anſwer'd to my moan,
And learn'd from me a name ſo dear.

If

If thou canſt now thoſe winning looks believe
That thus thy better ſenſe deceive;
If thou believ'ſt a languid glance
That ſeems to meet with thine by chance:
If thou canſt truſt a ſpeech of guileful words
That, without promiſe, every hope affords;
Then may'ſt thou think the artful maid
By love and mild compaſſion ſway'd:
Alas! I thought it once, but found myſelf betray'd.
Vain folly! Nyſa only knows to prize
The triumphs of her fatal eyes:
She only joys to view, each hour,
The crowd of wretches that increaſe her power:
She ſooths her lovers lately gain'd;
But thoſe inſults ſhe long has held
To Beauty's cruel yoke compell'd;
Yet not a ſlave eſcapes, whom once her wiles retain'd.
What art ſhe owns no tongue can tell,
What ſecret force of magic ſpell;
But, while ſhe ſcorns, ſhe bids ſoft paſſions riſe,
And, while ſhe ſeems to offend, ſhe binds with ſtronger ties.

If e'er ſhe warms thy breaſt to love,
No longer hope for peace;
A galling bondage ſhalt thou prove,
Nor ever find releaſe.

To love her with a conſtant heart,
New woes thou muſt ſuſtain;
And if thou ſeek'ſt from her to part,
Death only breaks thy chain.

THE

## THE STORM.

Ah! Nyſa, fly me not, nor think me here
With love's forbidden tale to vex thine ear.
But ſee! in threatening ſkies
The gathering tempeſt riſe!
Say, would'ſt thou lead to ſheltering fold
Thy timorous flock? A friend behold
To ſhare thy taſk—and think me not too bold.
Haſt thou no dread? An inſtant ſhrouds
The face of Heaven in darkening clouds;
The wind, high-lifting from the ground
The duſt and wither'd leaves, in eddies whirls them round.
From murmurs thro' the branches light:
From fluttering birds' uncertain flight:
From the drops that, falling ſlow,
Our cheeks bedew—full well I know
By every ſign——Ah! Nyſa, told I true?
Hark! how the thunder growls, the ſtreamy lightning view:
But, whither, whither doſt thou fly?
Ah! turn again,—a friend is nigh:
Forget thy flock, to yonder cave repair,
And I, beſide thee plac'd, will watch my darling fair.

Thou

Thou trembleſt, idol of my heart,
New fears thy boſom move;
Fear not—from thee I'll ne'er depart,
Nor whiſper aught of love.

When thunders roar and lightnings play,
With thee ſtill let me dwell;
But when the ſtorm is paſt away,
Ungrateful nymph, farewell.

Sit then, ſecurely ſit—within the womb
Of this lone rock, no lightnings pierce the gloom,
No thunder-bolt deſcends:
Wide-circling round a laurel grove extends,
And from celeſtial wrath this hallow'd ſpot defends,
Sit then, my love—O! Heavens! I feel thee now
Cloſe-trembling at my ſide—thy hands entwin'd
Are lock'd in mine, as if deſign'd
To keep me near thee ſtill—and what ſhall bid me go?
Rage, rage, ye ſkies! ye rage in vain,
Here ſtill unſhaken I remain.
O! moments ſought ſo long; but far more dear
Were theſe the fruits of love, and not of fear.
Yet let me, Nyſa, ſtill believe,
And ſtill my flatter'd ſenſe deceive——
Who knows? perhaps I long thy heart poſſeſs'd,
And modeſty, not rigour, chill'd thy breaſt.

The

The terror now thou ſeem'ſt to prove
Perhaps is but the feint of love
Ah! ſpeak, my fair, have I truth divin'd?
Thy lips are ſilent ſtill, thine eyes to earth declin'd.
—O! Heavens! a bluſh! a ſmile!
Do theſe my hopes beguile?
O! no—I ſee, nor ſee by hope alone,
That bluſh, that ſmile makes every wiſh my own.

Amidſt the gloom returning peace
Forbids me more to mourn,
Then never may the tempeſt ceaſe,
Or cheerful day return.

Of all the days the ſun can give
I ſeek no brighter ſky:
With thee, my love, I thus would live,
With thee I thus would die.

JEALOUSY.

## JEALOUSY.

Forgive me, deareſt Nyſa, O! forgive
My jealous thoughts, nor let me longer live
To call thee faithleſs—I deteſt
The dark ſuſpicions harbour'd in my breaſt.
No more my doubts ſhall wrong the fair;
Now, by thoſe beauteous lips I ſwear;
For ſtill in thee, thou treaſure of my ſoul!
The laws I worſhip that my fate control.

Yes, beauteous lips, where gentle love
Has fram'd his downy neſt;
To me you vow'd your truth to prove;
Your vow muſt every fear remove;
On that my hope I reſt.

If e'er I raſhly more complain
Of lovely Nyſa's flight,
Henceforth from me may Heaven retain
The cheering beams of light.

I own my crime, nor ſeek to make defence,
Then puniſh if thou wilt—yet ſome pretence
Thy lover ſure may plead for theſe alarms,
Since Thyrſis dotes upon thy charms.

**This well I know, and thou no leſs,**
**O! Nyſa, muſt the truth confeſs.**
**From all ſecluded thee I find**
**With him in ſecret converſe join'd.**
At my approach a deep vermillion dyes
Thy alter'd cheek, from his the colour flies.
Both ſeem confus'd,
As ſelf-accus'd,
And eithers' faltering words confeſs ſurpriſe.
He ſteals a tender look at thee;
Thou ſmil'ſt at him, and ah! I ſee
How well the ſmile and bluſh agree.
When firſt to thee I ſpoke of love,
Such, cruel Nyſa, was thy ſmile,
So did thy bluſh my heart beguile,
And do I cauſeleſs now thy want of truth reprove?
And doſt thou not betray me? Faithleſs maid!
Ingrate and barbarous!—Ah! what have I ſaid?
I ſwore on thee my peace to reſt;
And lo! new doubts my peace moleſt.
Dear nymph, forgive—in vain I ſwore,
And now my folly I deplore:
Ah! think that love diſtracts my brain,
Nor think me now the firſt to ſwear and ſwear in vain.

When

When ſafe at land the ſailor vows
To truſt no more the waves;
But when the ſtorm no longer blows,
Again the deep he braves.

The warrior oft, retir'd from arms,
Abjures the ſword to yield;
But when the trumpet ſounds alarms,
He ruſhes to the field.

THE

## THE OBSTACLE.

TELL me, proud ſtream, the hidden ſource
From which thy riſing waters flow:
I haſte to Chloris—ſtay thy courſe—
O! hear me—I to Chloris go.

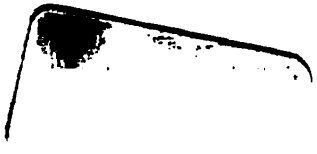
She waits me on the further ſhore;
Ah! let me now my fair one join;
Then through my fields a deluge pour,
At thee no longer I'll repine.

But while I ſpeak, behold thy flood increas'd;
The day is near, light ſtreaks the glimmering eaſt.
My Chloris waits, but waits in vain,
While yet compell'd I here remain.
Ah! cruel thou, what crime unknown
Has drawn on me thy vengeance down?
Oft have I turn'd the herds aſide
To keep unſtain'd thy limpid tide:
From Phyllis and Lycoris I alone
Preſerv'd the flowers along thy margin grown.
To ſpare thy ſtream I oft refus'd to take
A few cool drops my thirſt to ſlake.
If e'er the world has heard thy name,
To me, and to my muſe aſcribe the fame.
When ſummer heats have parch'd the glade,
If then thou glideſt through the ſhade,

'Twas I whoſe care thoſe ſhades ſupplied,
And bade the laurel deck thy now ungrateful tide.
Thy waters once would idly creep,
And ſcarce their humble channel ſteep.
A ſlender branch, that from a ſapling nigh
The wind had rent, ſuffic'd to turn thy current dry.
A river now, with ſwelling waves,
No more controll'd, thy fury raves;
And bears along, diſdaining bound,
The ſtones and trees with deafening ſound,
Heeds not in me a lover's plaintive cry,
Nor liſtens to my prayer, but foams and paſſes by.

Yet ſoon, within a narrower bed
Again thou ſhalt ſubſide,
And ſcarce with ſcanty moiſture fed,
Through murmuring pebbles glide.

Then will I paſs from ſhore to ſhore,
In ſport thy waters ſtain,
That ne'er ſhall roll their tribute more
Unſullied to the main.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

MAR 11 1953